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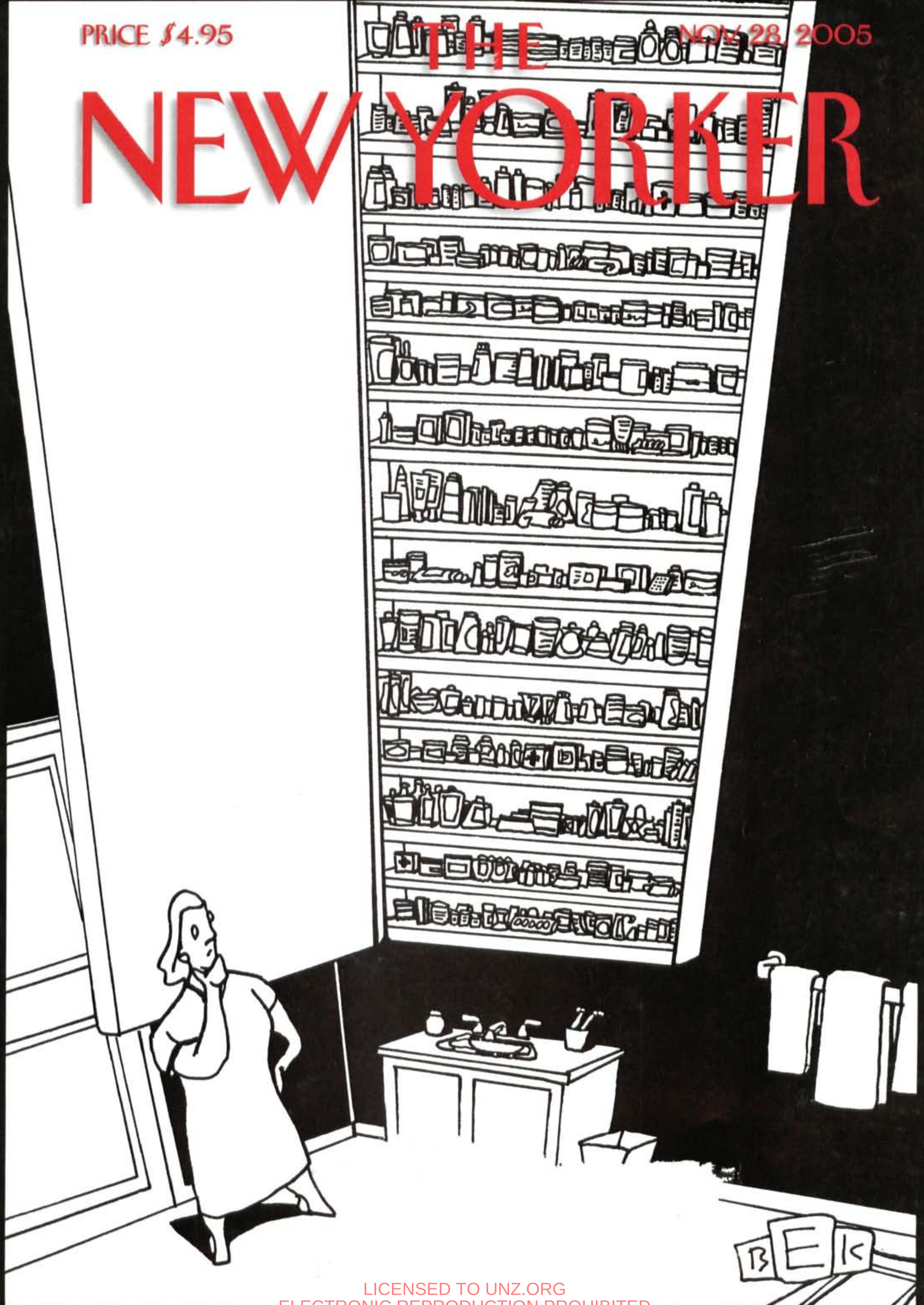
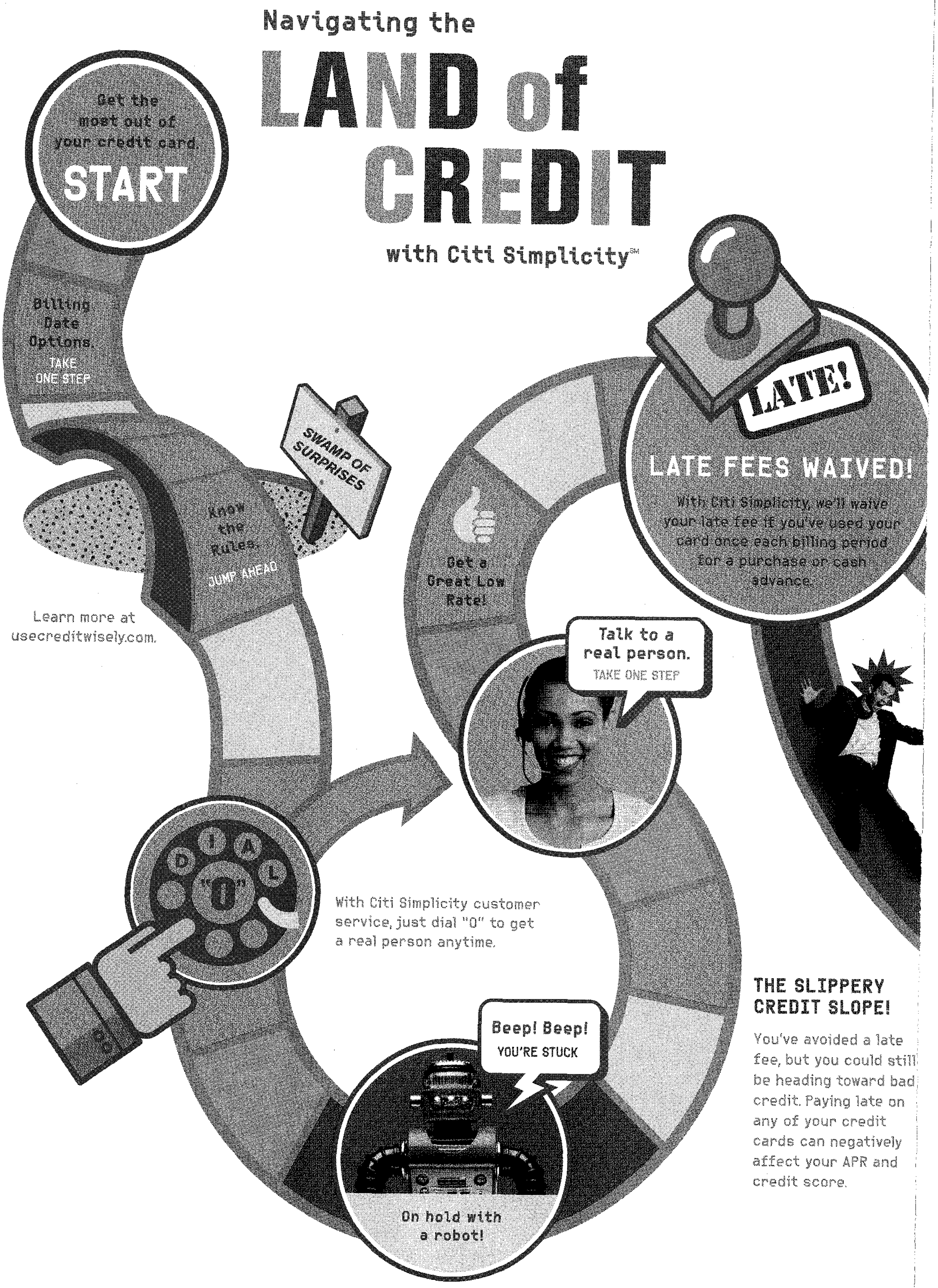
THE NEW YORKER

NOV. 28, 2005





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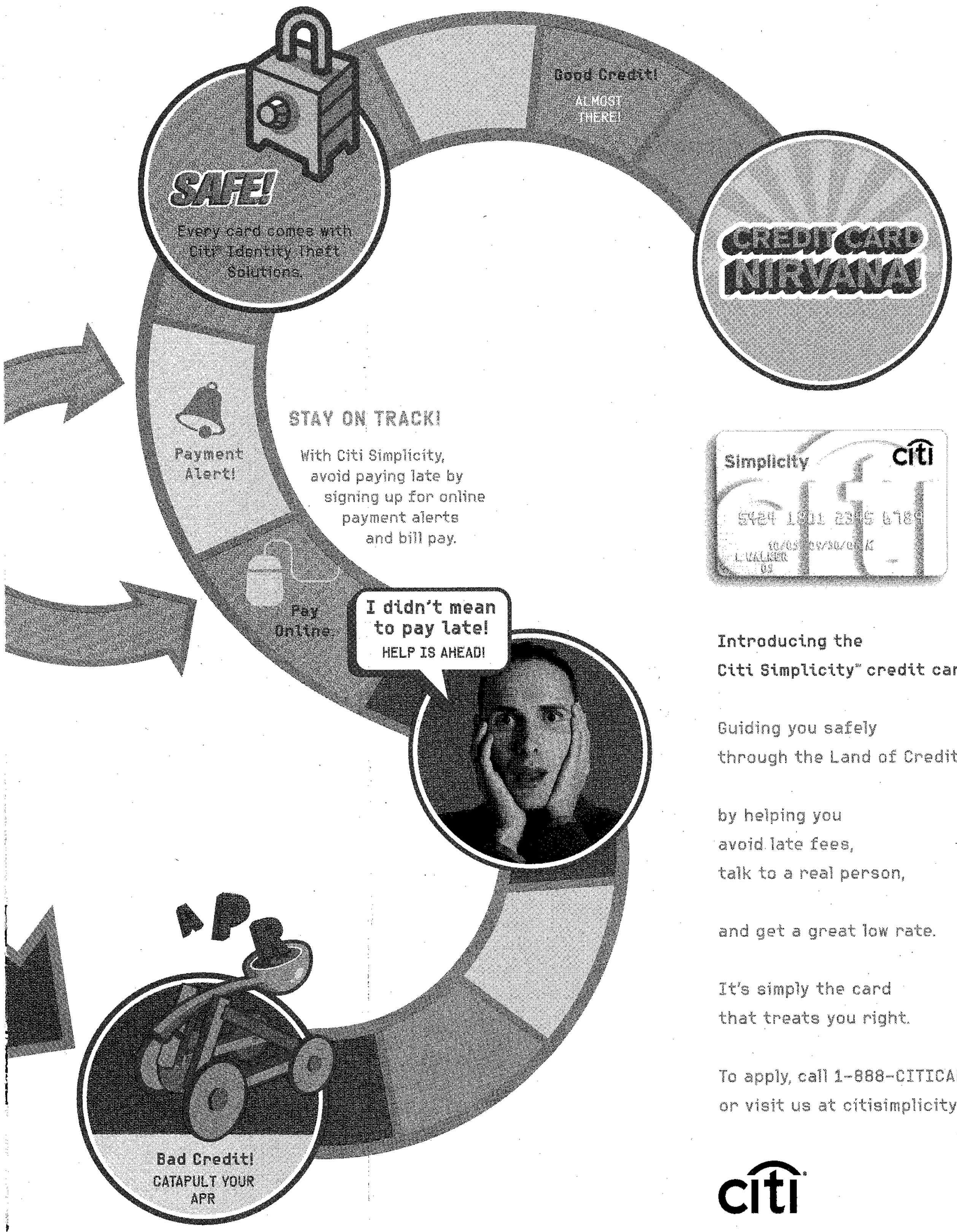
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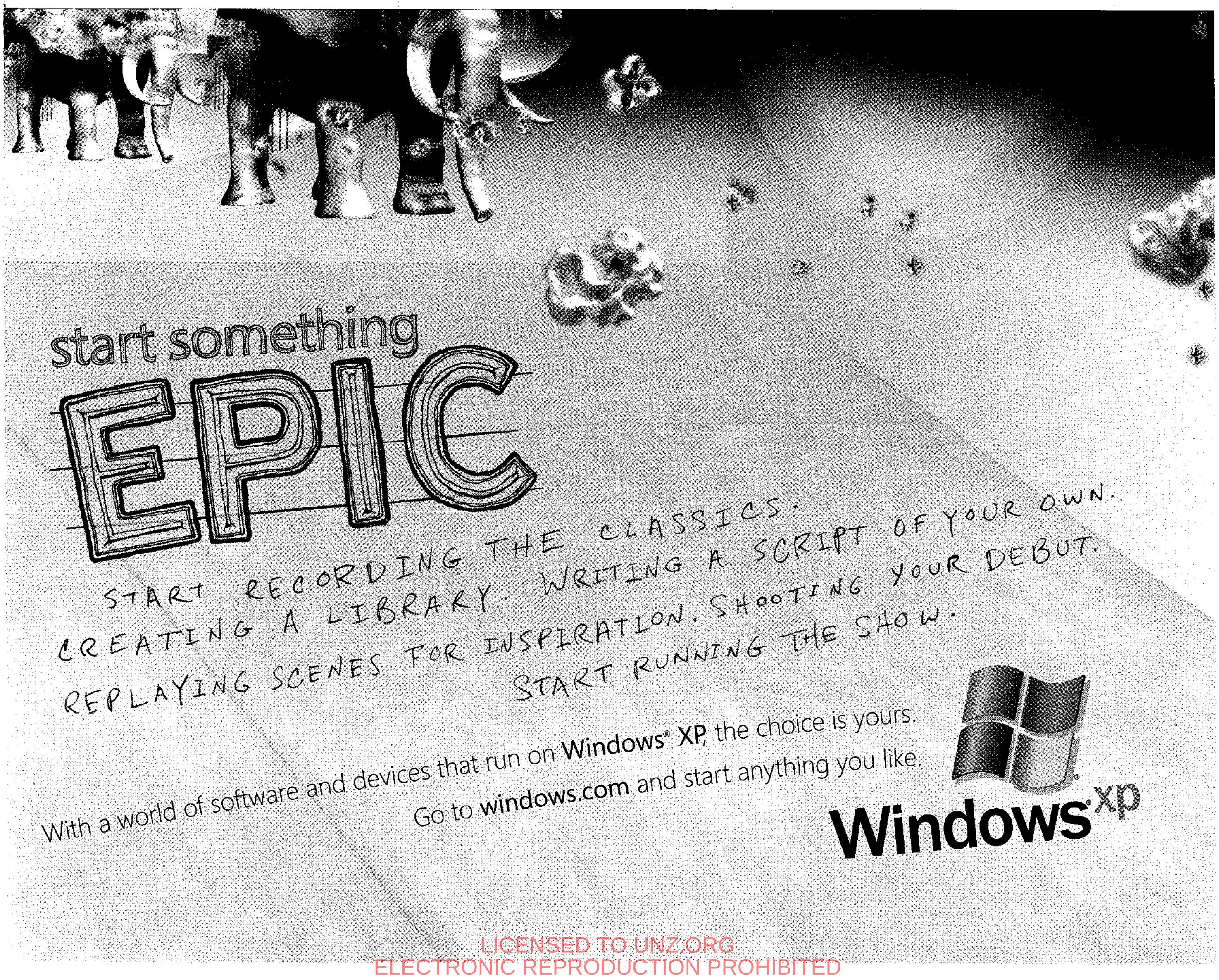
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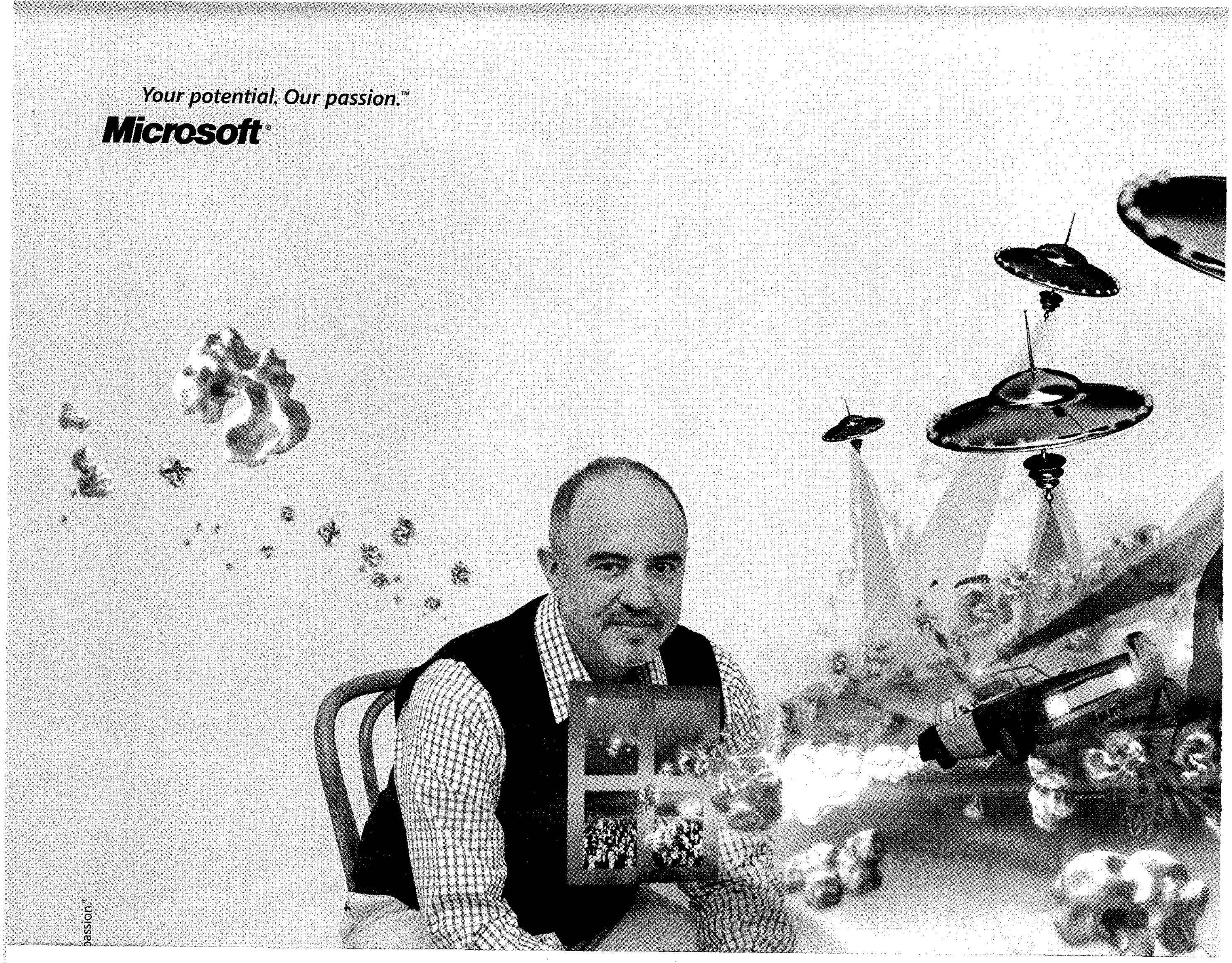
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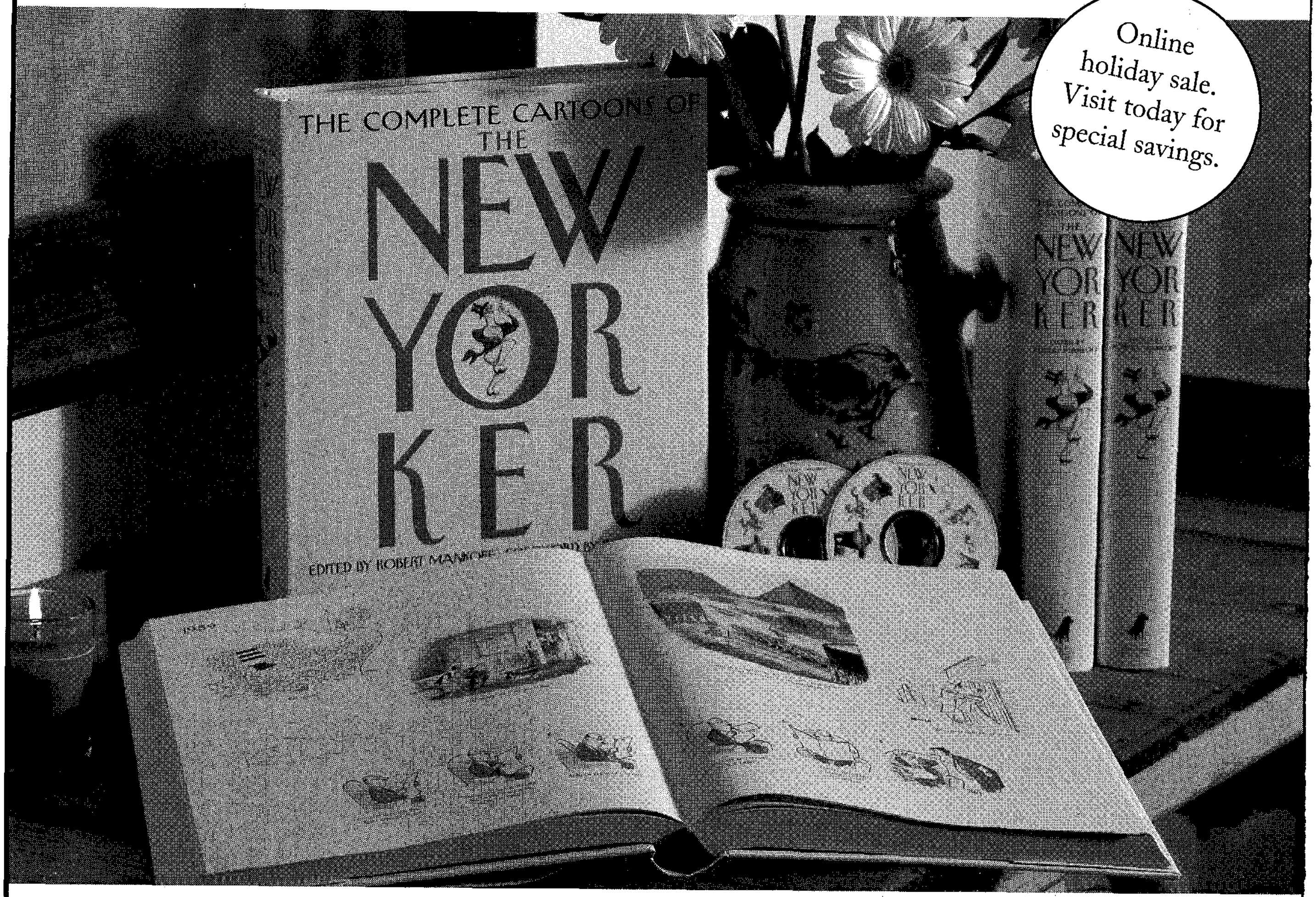
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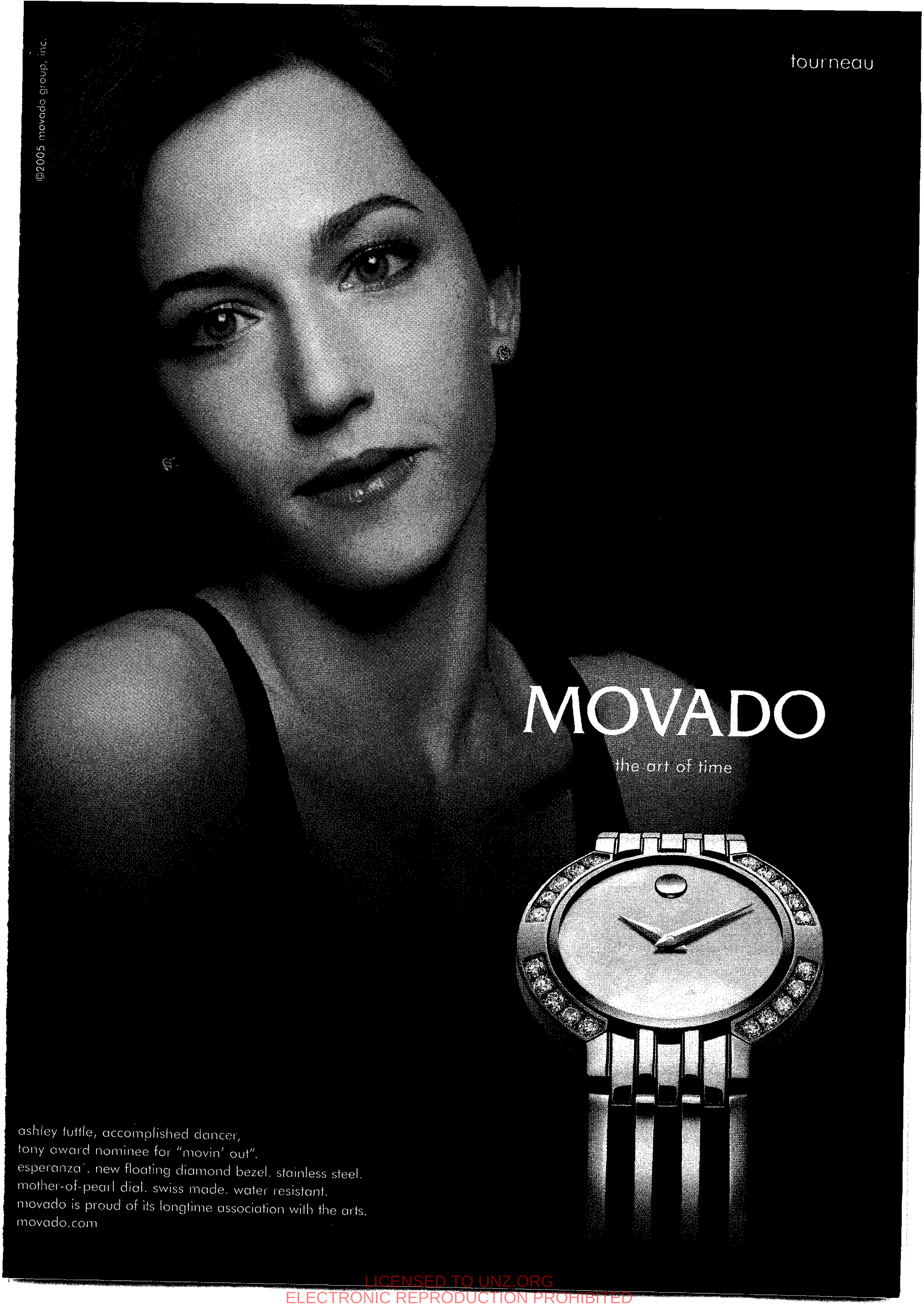
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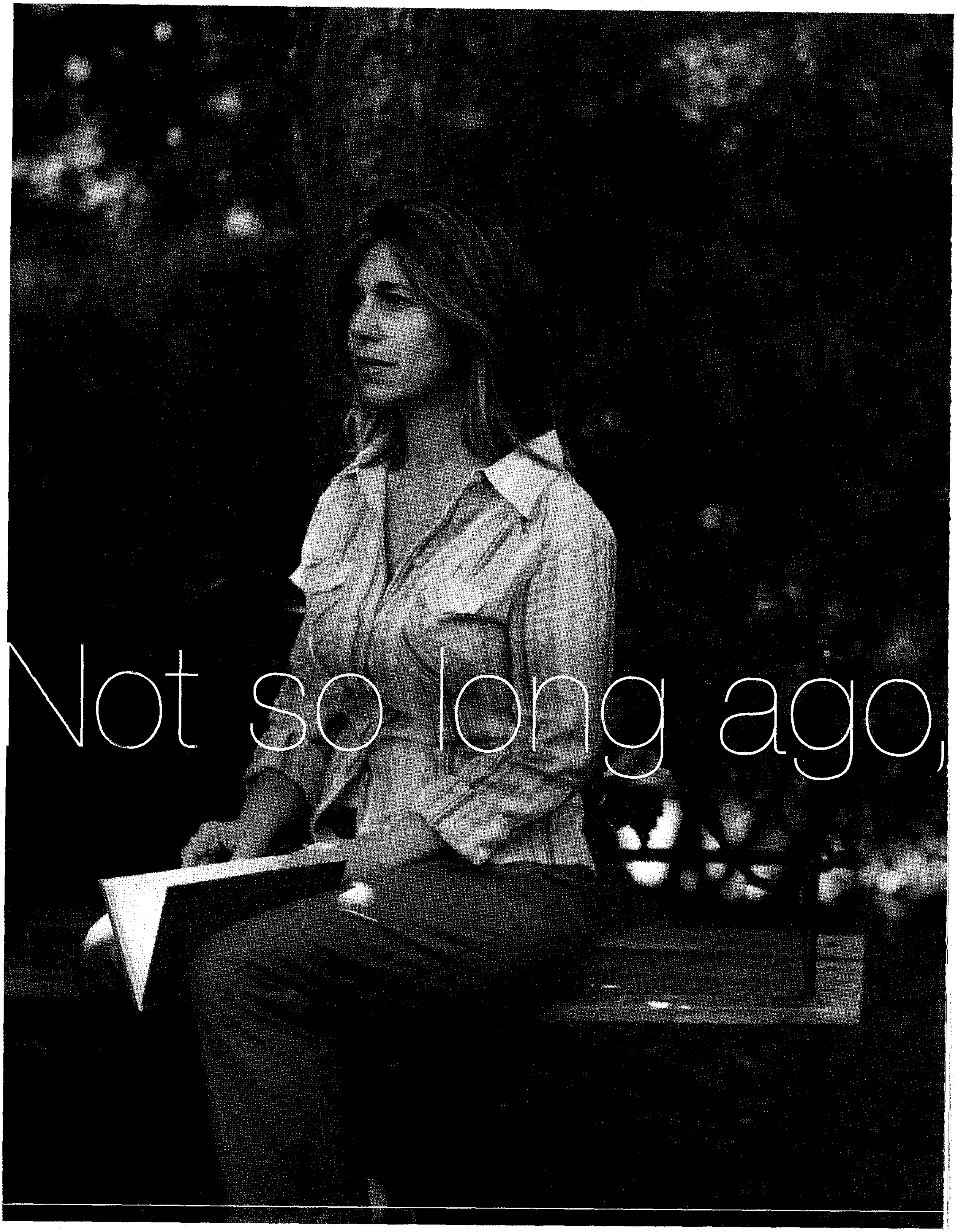
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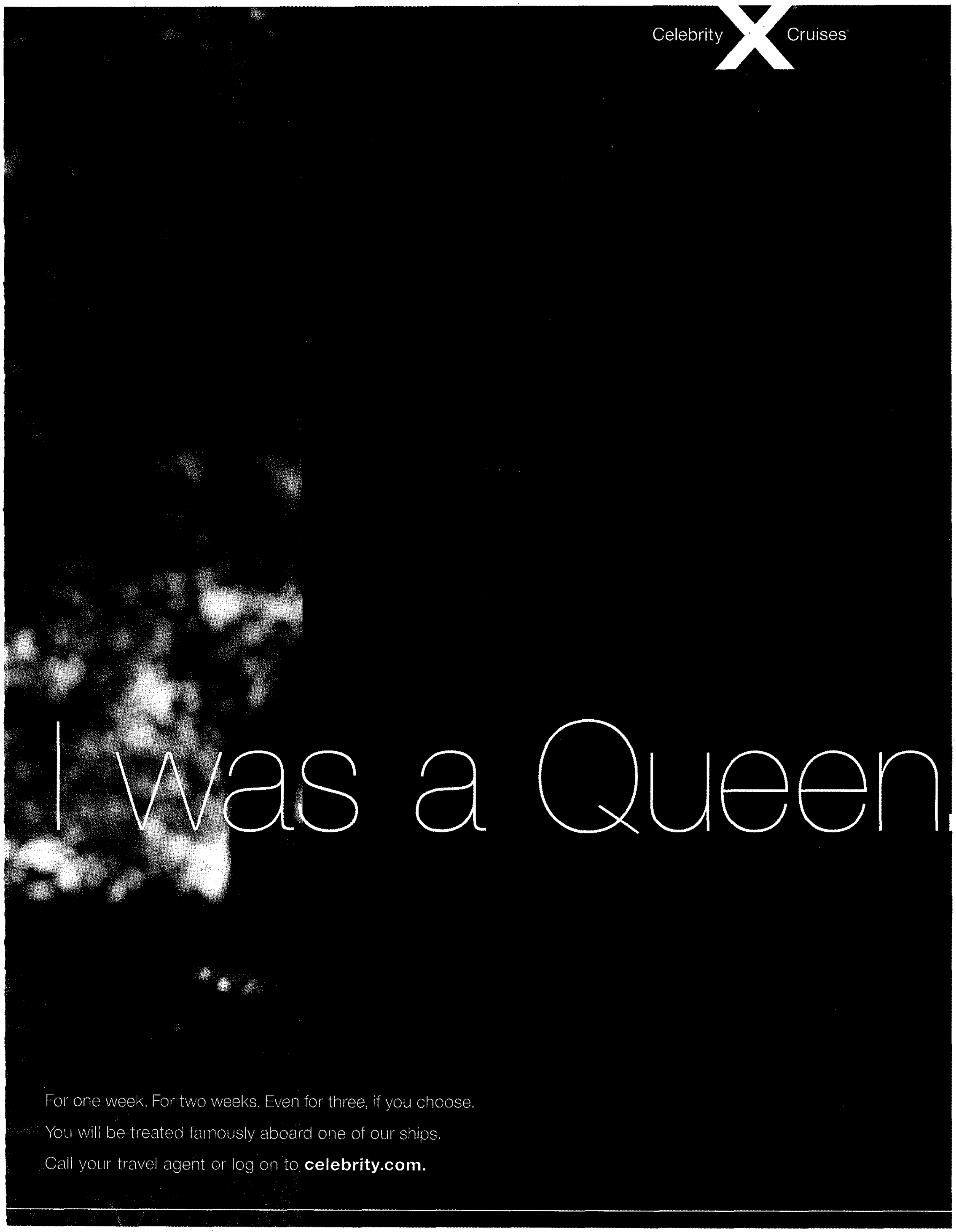
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THE NEW YORKER
THE CARTOON ISSUE

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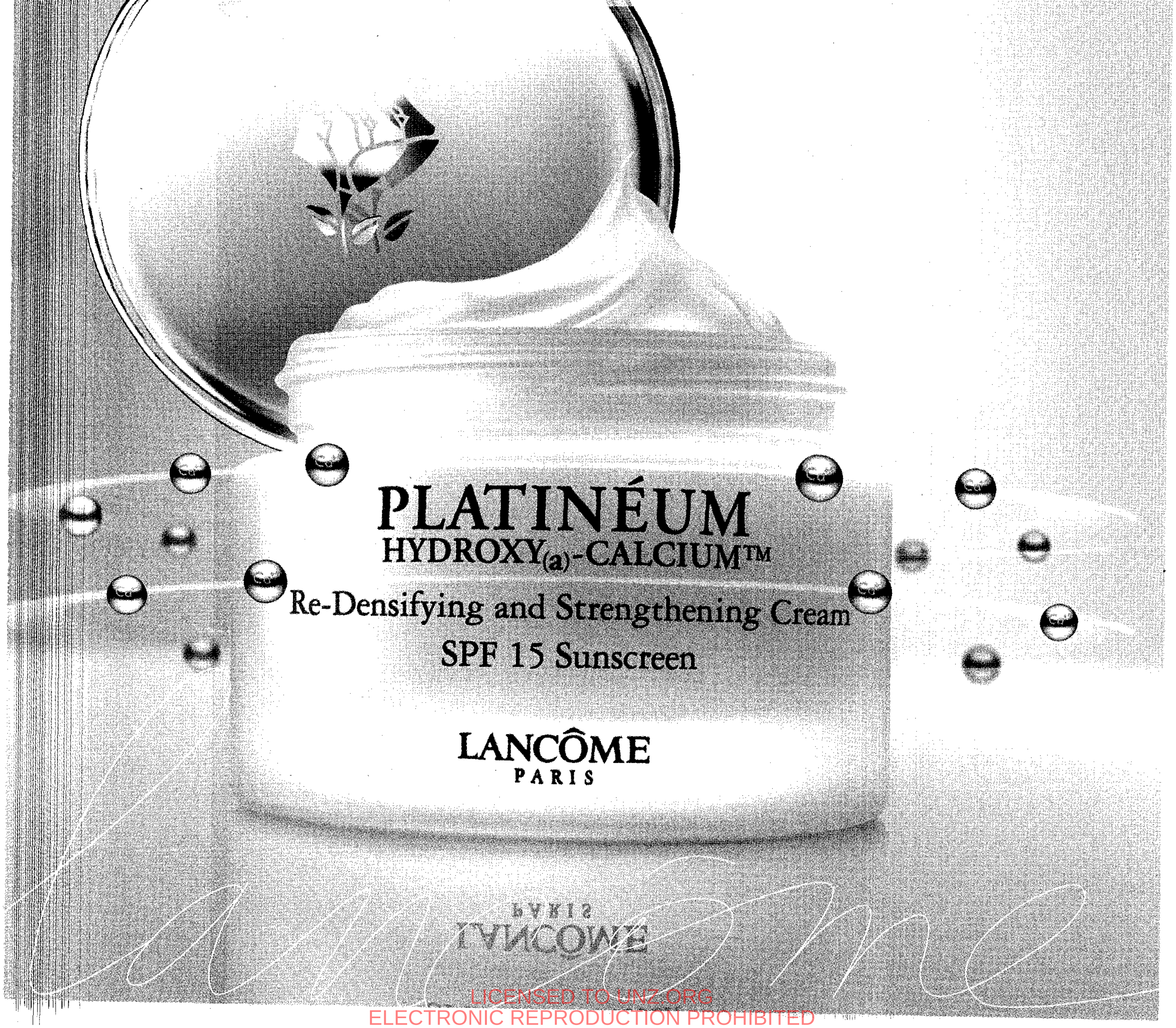
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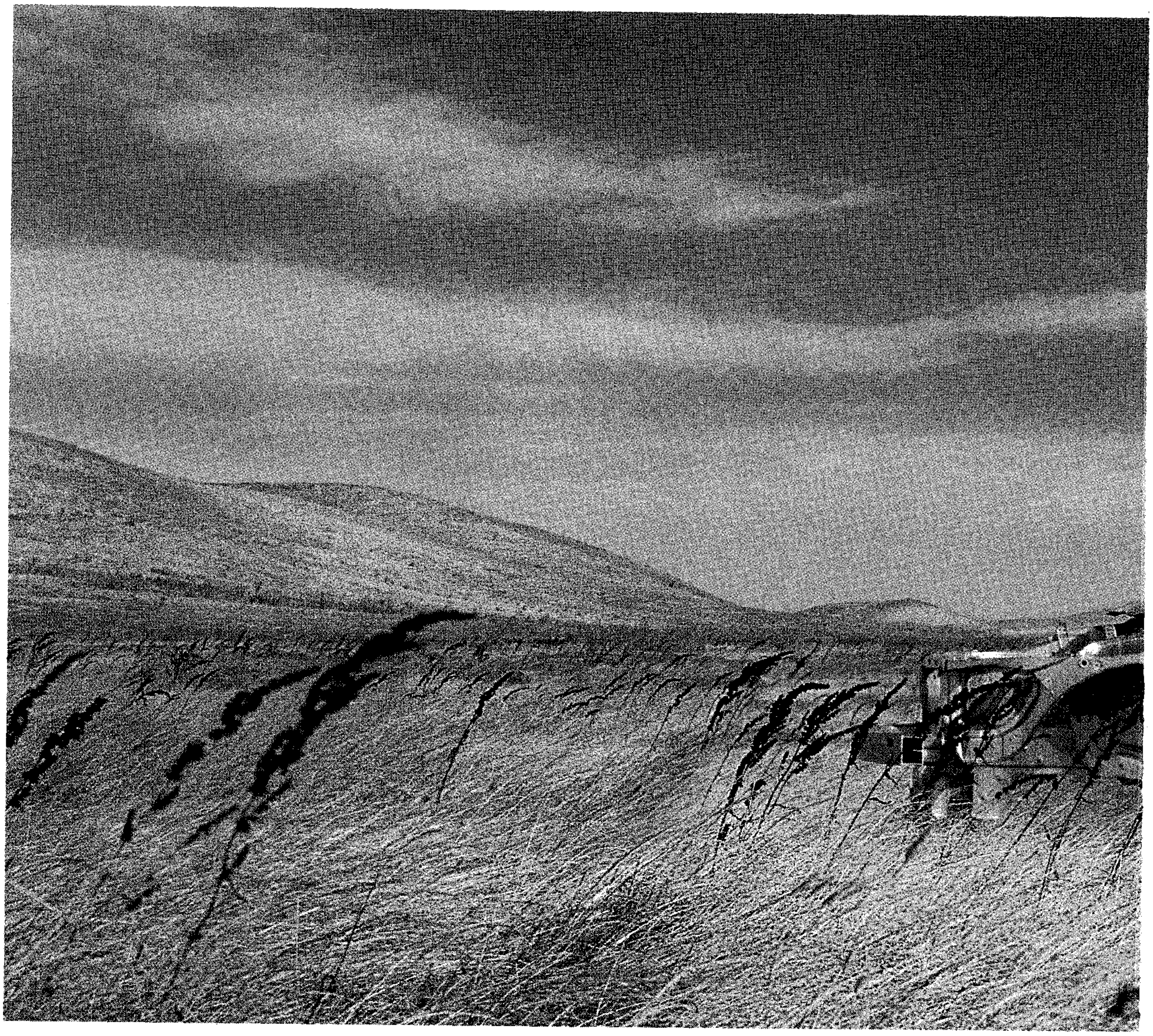

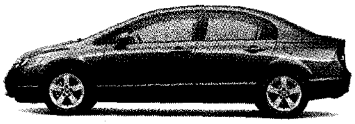

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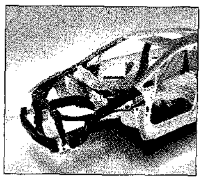

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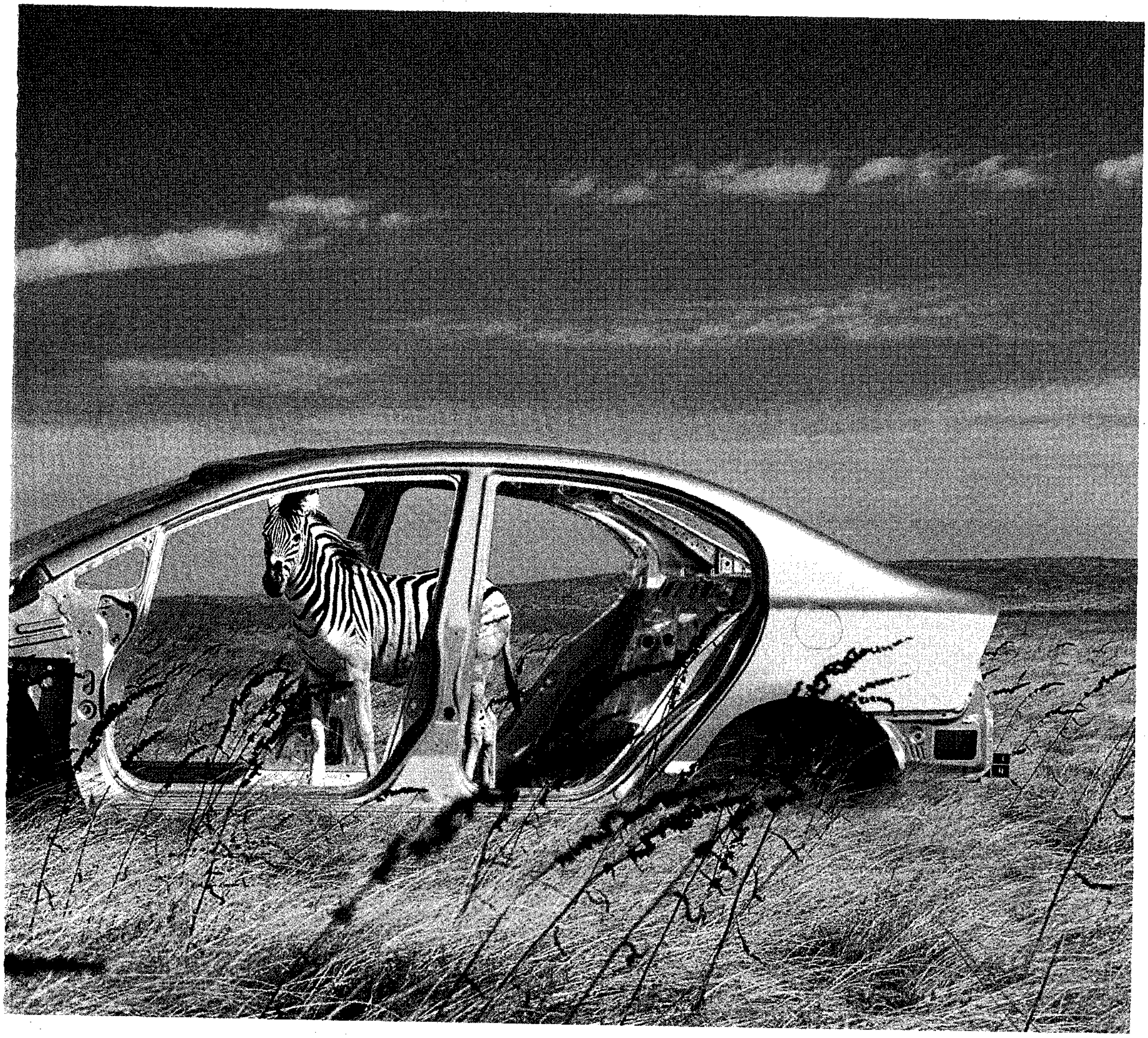

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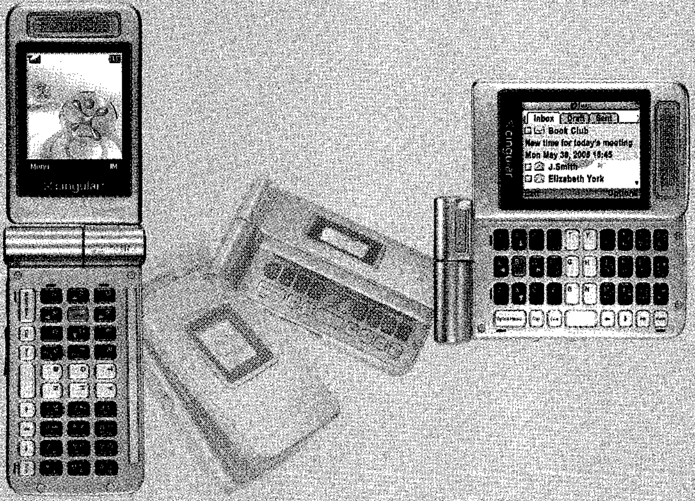
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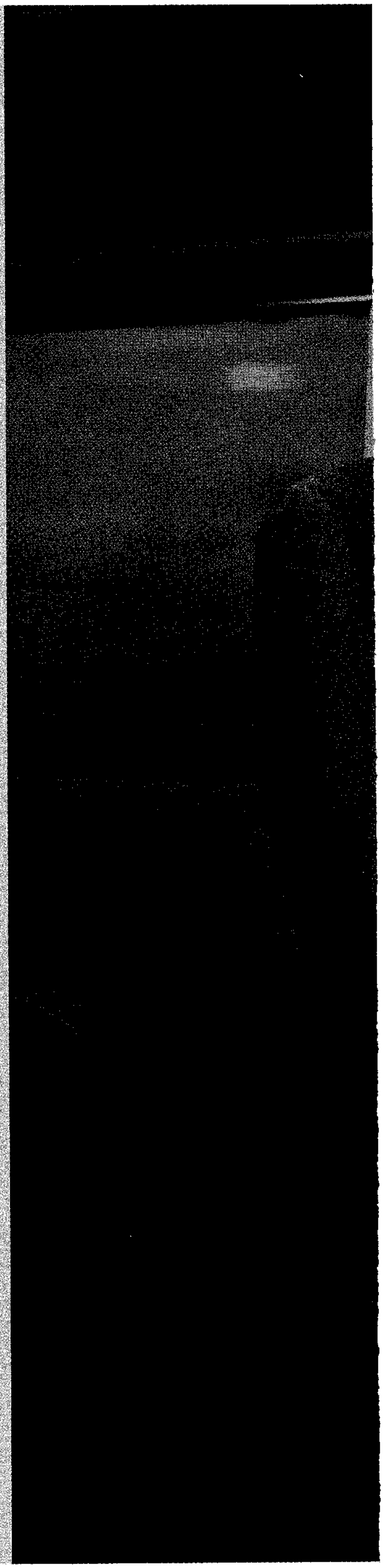

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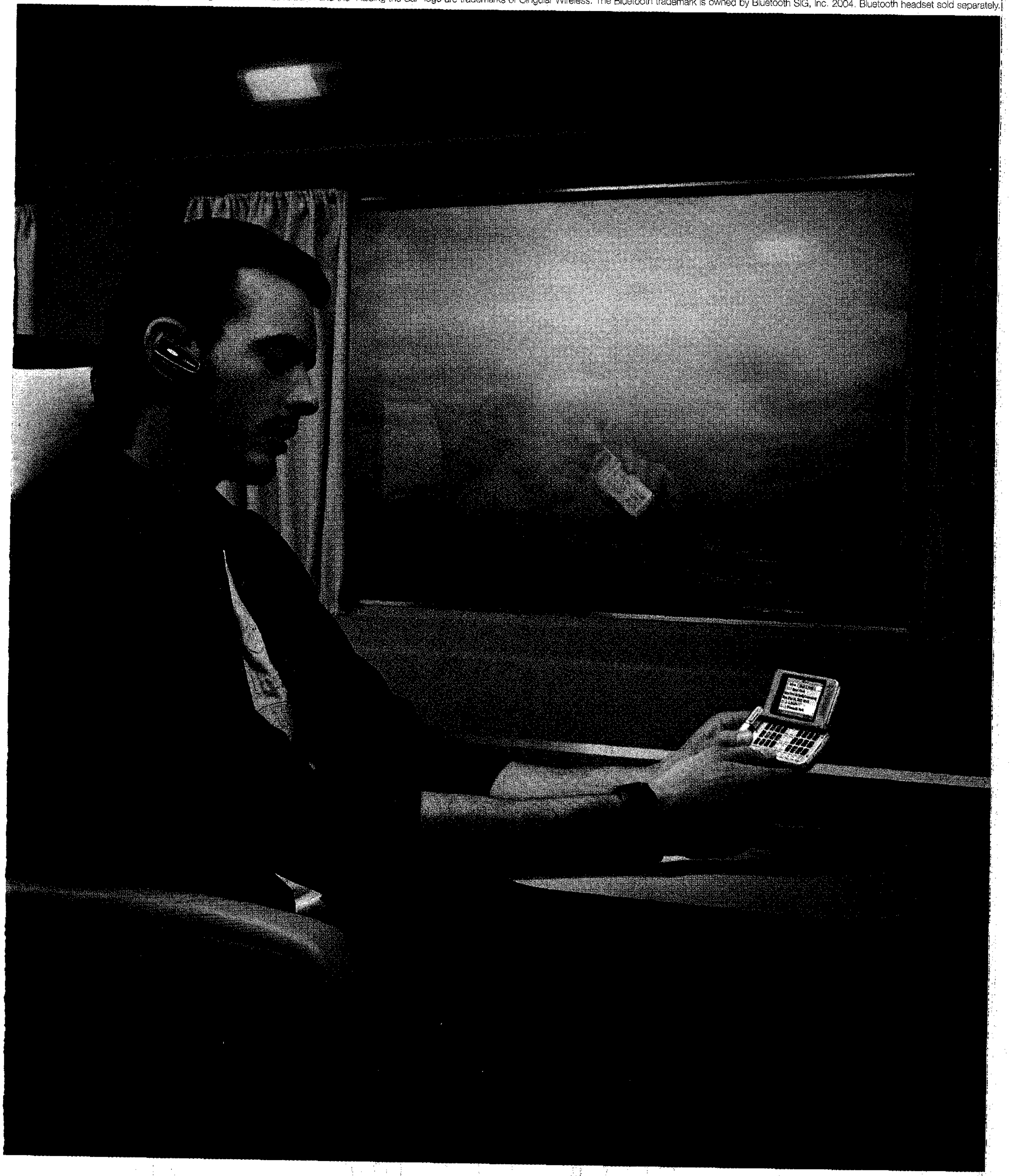

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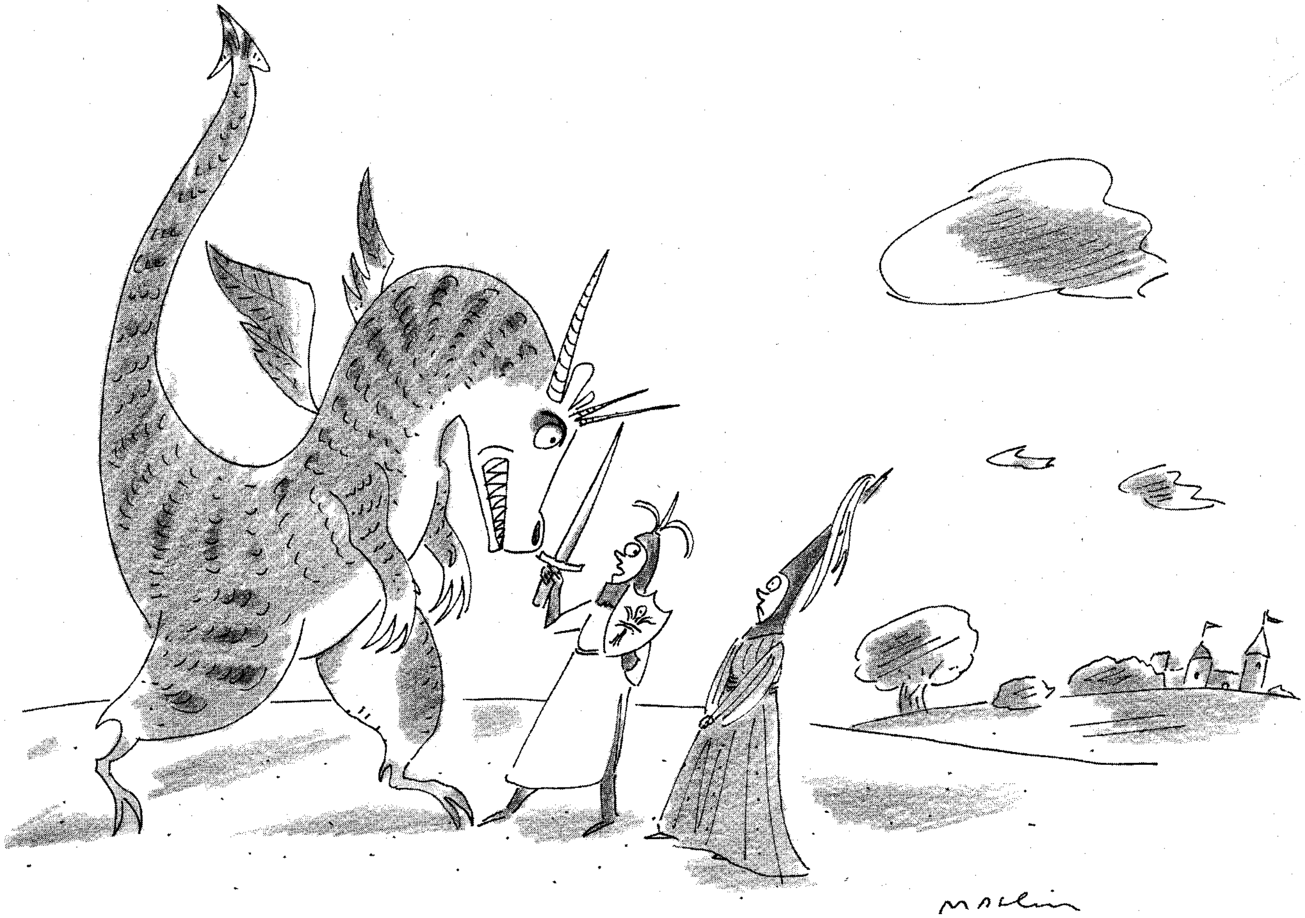
SPOTS *Saul Steinberg*



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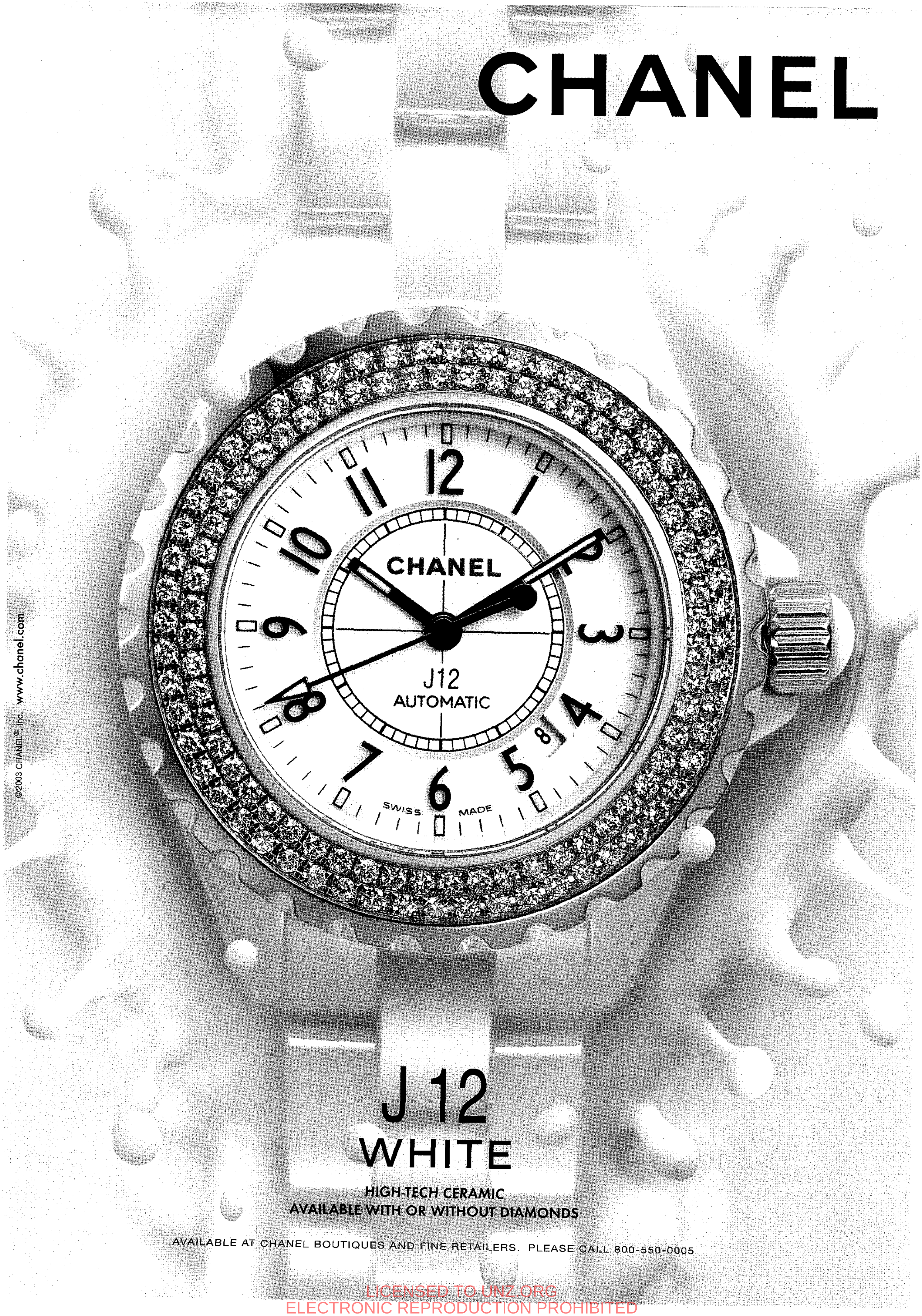
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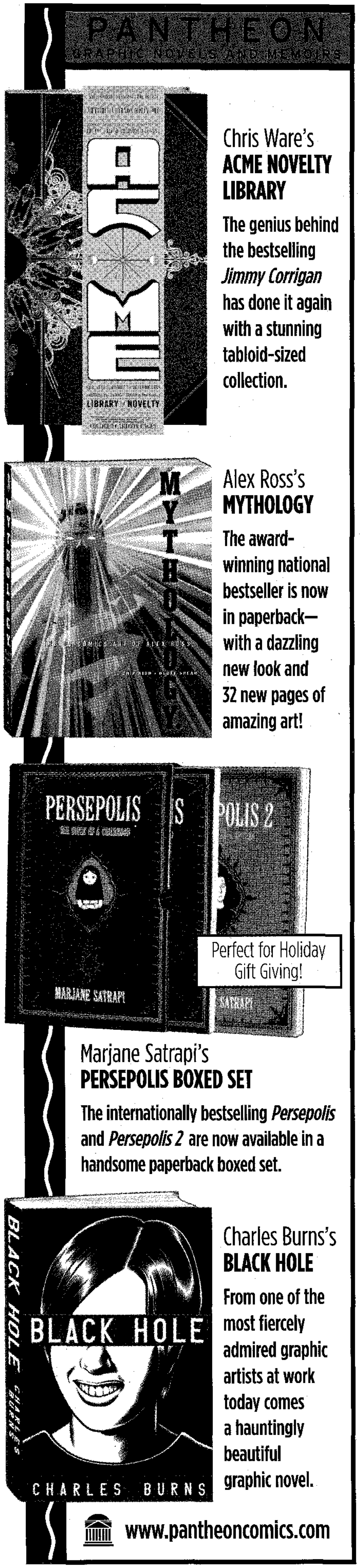
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CONTRIBUTORS

Samantha Power (Comment, p. 61) won the Pulitzer Prize in nonfiction in 2003, for her book " 'A Problem from Hell': America and the Age of Genocide."

Jeffrey Toobin ("Still Standing," p. 70) has been a staff writer since 1993.

Katherine Boo ("Shelter and the Storm," p. 82) is a MacArthur Fellow. She received a Pulitzer Prize for public-service reporting in 2000.

Tom Reiss ("Imagining the Worst," p. 106) is the author of "The Orientalist: Solving the Mystery of a Strange and Dangerous Life."

John McPhee ("Land of the Diesel Bear," p. 116) has written twenty-seven books, including "Uncommon Carriers," which comes out next May.

Bruce Eric Kaplan (Cover; Cartoon, p. 108) wrote and illustrated "Every Person on the Planet," a picture book for adults, which has just been published.

Aleksandar Hemon (Fiction, p. 132) is the author of two works of fiction, "The Question of Bruno" and "Nowhere Man."

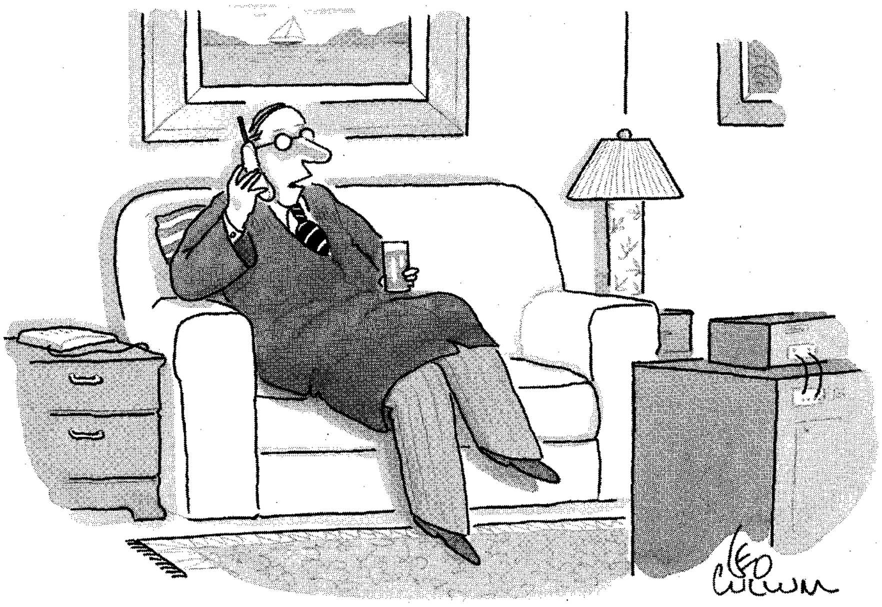
Alex Gregory ("Welcome Death, Inc.," p. 162), a cartoonist, also writes for television and film. He lives in Los Angeles.

Roz Chast ("Car Trip," p. 154) has been a contributor for more than twenty-five years. Her most recent book is "The Party, After You Left."

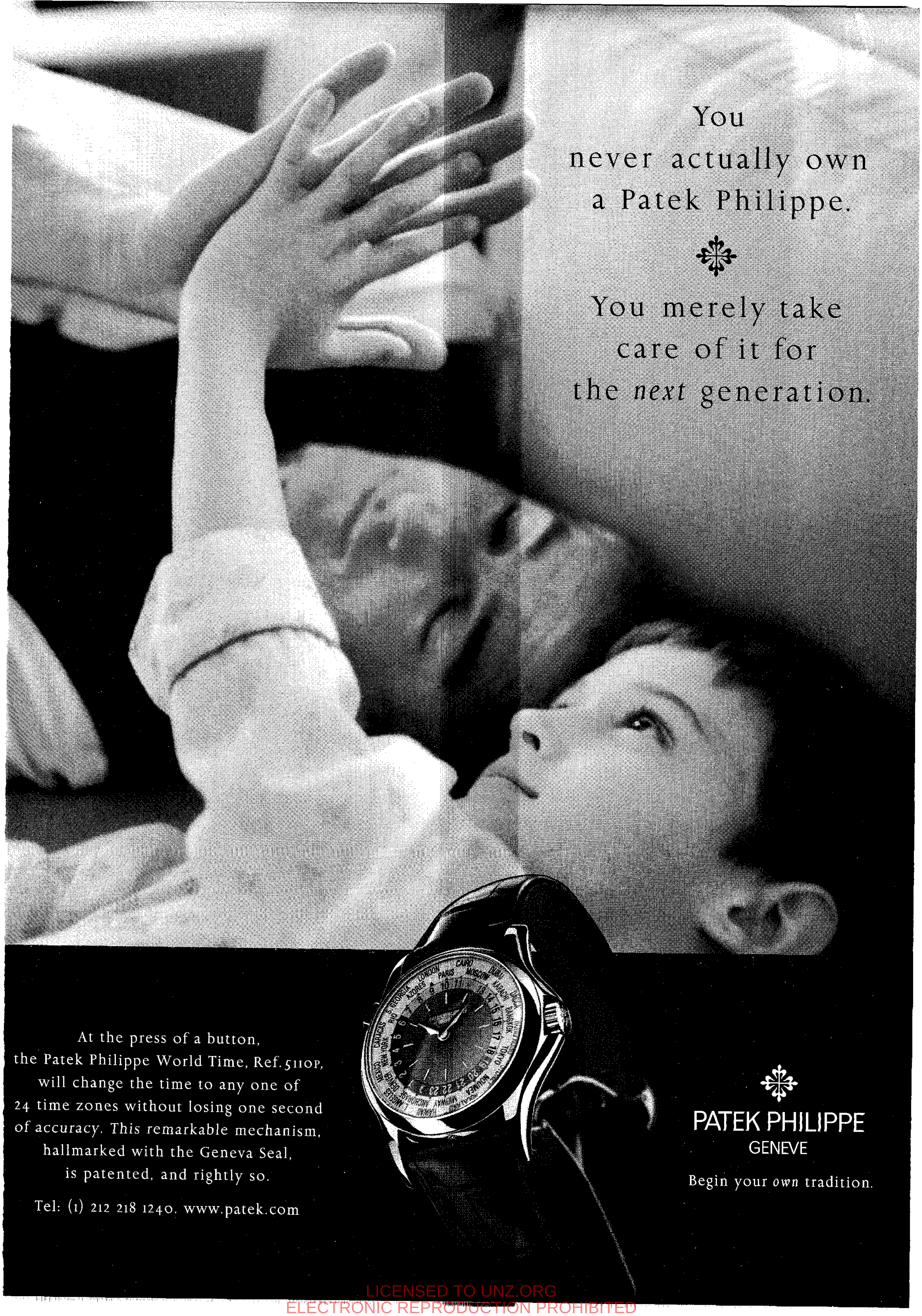
Frank Cotham ("Judgment Day," p. 158, Cartoon, p.160) is a cartoonist whose work has appeared in the magazine since 1993.

Aline & R. Crumb ("Saving Face," p. 164) have worked together on many projects over the past thirty years, including "The Complete Dirty Laundry Comics" and "Self Loathing."

Lee Lorenz (Portfolio, p. 156) will have an exhibit of his paintings and drawings in the spring. ♦



"These days, I'm mostly just legislating from the couch."



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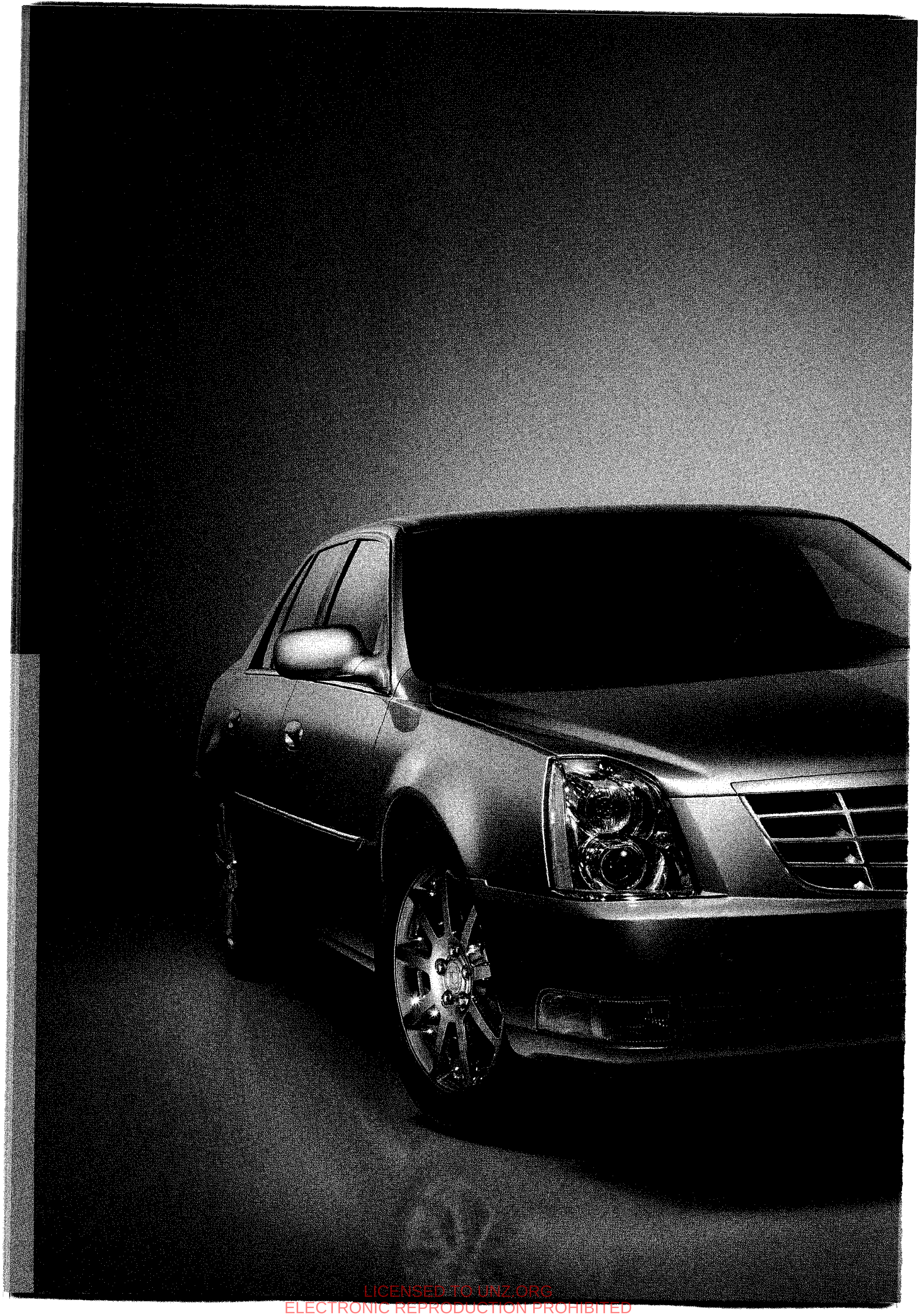

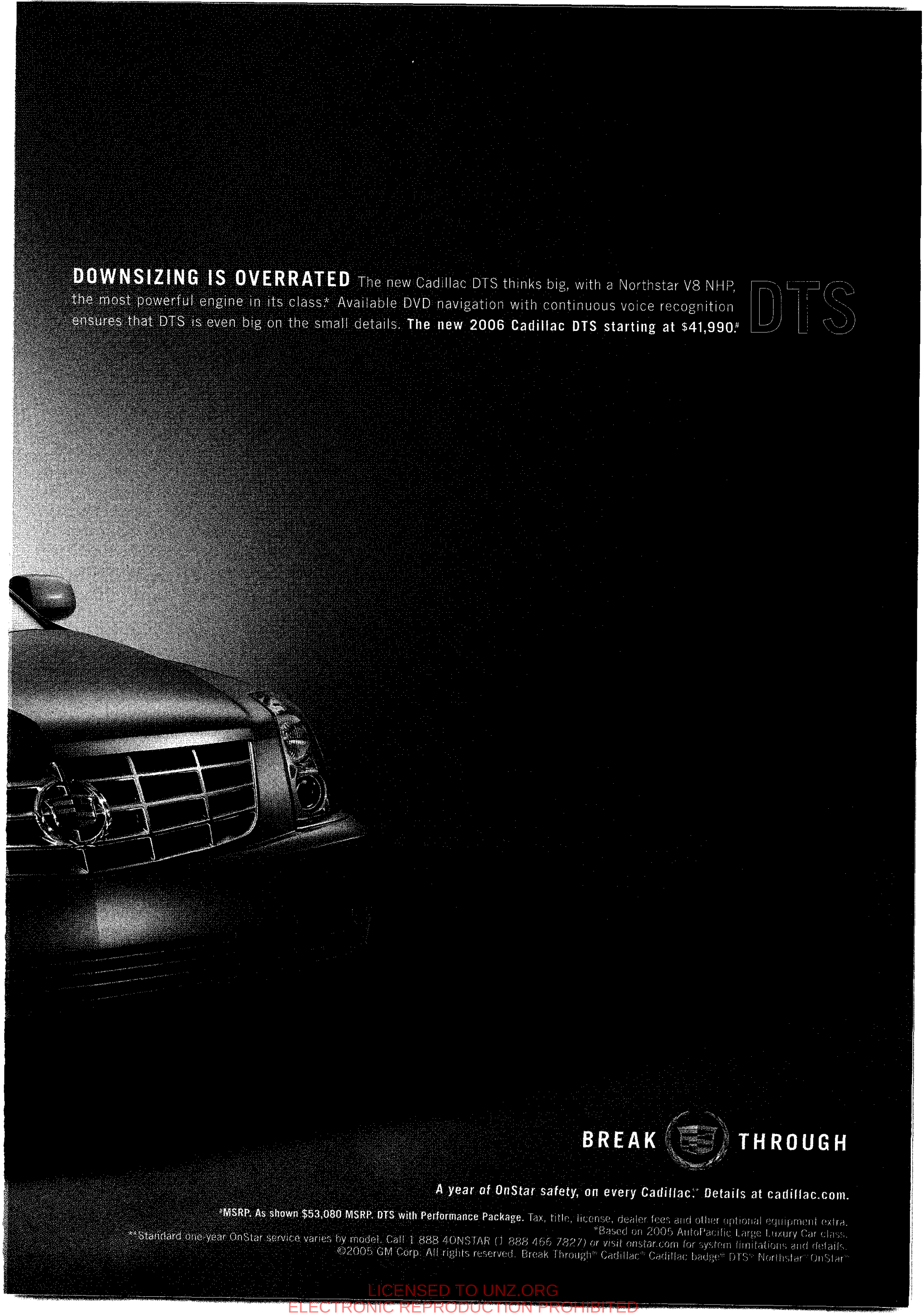**DOWNSIZING IS OVERRATED** The new Cadillac DTS thinks big, with a Northstar V8 NHP, the most powerful engine in its class.[*] Available DVD navigation with continuous voice recognition ensures that DTS is even big on the small details. **The new 2006 Cadillac DTS starting at $41,990.[#]**

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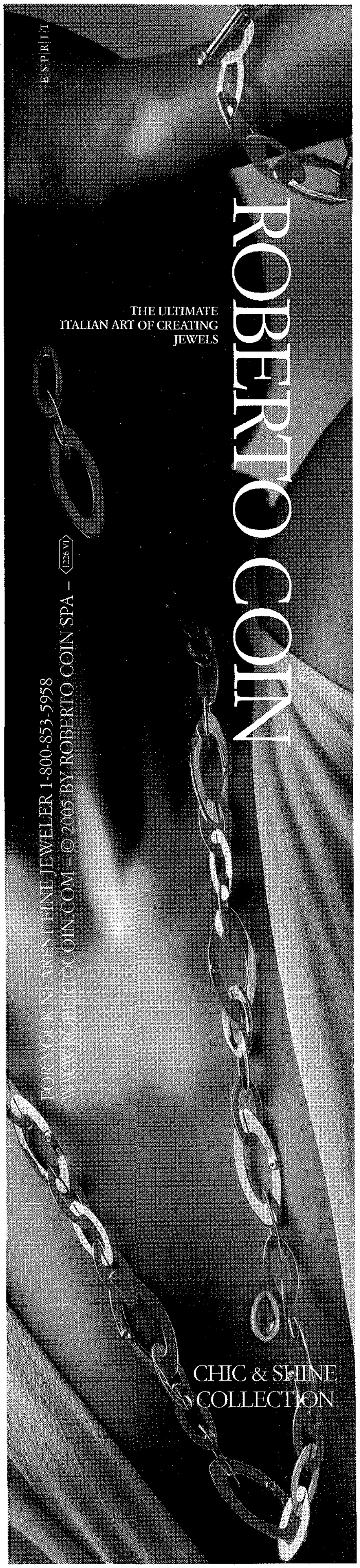

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LINE DRAWN

Peter Schjeldahl's piece on graphic novels generally hews to the approved canon of "serious" works and creators (Books, October 17th). Unfortunately, he also echoes the fashionable disdain for the work of the late comic-book pioneer Will Eisner. There seems to be a compulsion on the part of some creators and critics to distance themselves from Eisner's sentimental "cornball histrionics" and old-fashioned craft. His work may not be to everyone's taste, but Eisner made sequential art a viable medium for serious narrative as early as the nineteen-forties. He was a principal architect of comics, both as an art and as a business, and literally invented much of the visual language that Clowes, Ware, Spiegelman, and Crumb employ so fruitfully in their work.
Rob Salkowitz
Seattle, Wash.

It's nice that Schjeldahl gives "Jimmy Corrigan," among others, a good review. Still, his survey of Crumb, Pekar, and Spiegelman, and his peremptory dismissal of both manga and shojo manga, which he calls "kinky romance manga for girls," only reinforce the appearance that he is a stranger in a strange land. Schjeldahl seems to view graphic novels as a block "movement," which they are not, any more than text, film, or any other medium is. And his supposition that "the major discoveries of the graphic novel's new world of the imagination have already been accomplished" is an observation that reflects more poorly on the critic's understanding than on the works themselves.
Steven A. Torres-Roman
DeKalb, Ill.

MAKING THE GRADE

Malcolm Gladwell may be right that from the perspective of pure economic value an Ivy League education is just an "aesthetic experience" (A Critic at Large, October 10th), but such a credential has its own value in social prestige and status. Imagine two people making the same amount of money who attended different schools. Who will have higher standing in the eyes of others—the guy with the Harvard degree or the one across the street with a degree from Ohio State? Under the American system, the relative prestige of one's alma mater is the only generally accepted way of demonstrating academic merit. There is no graceful way for me to make known my S.A.T. scores or grade-point average, but the identity of my school appears on any cursory biographical statement. This sole intellectual status symbol is conspicuously devalued when it is awarded, as Gladwell notes, partly on the basis of athletic ability, personal appearance, or social standing.
Andrew Stumpff-Kane
East Lansing, Mich.

In an ideal world, admission to Harvard and other élite schools would be based solely on academic merit. However, academic ability is not a predictor of success in the business world—charisma, energy, and motivation are often more important factors than I.Q.—and those who earn higher incomes tend to donate to the endowment of their alma mater. These universities have developed admissions policies that increase incoming dollars, a perfectly acceptable strategy in our capitalist society. Idealists may be shocked, but pragmatists know that Harvard and Yale are wise in admitting future survivors of the fittest.
Robert Motta
Professor of Psychology, Hofstra University
Hempstead, N.Y.

•

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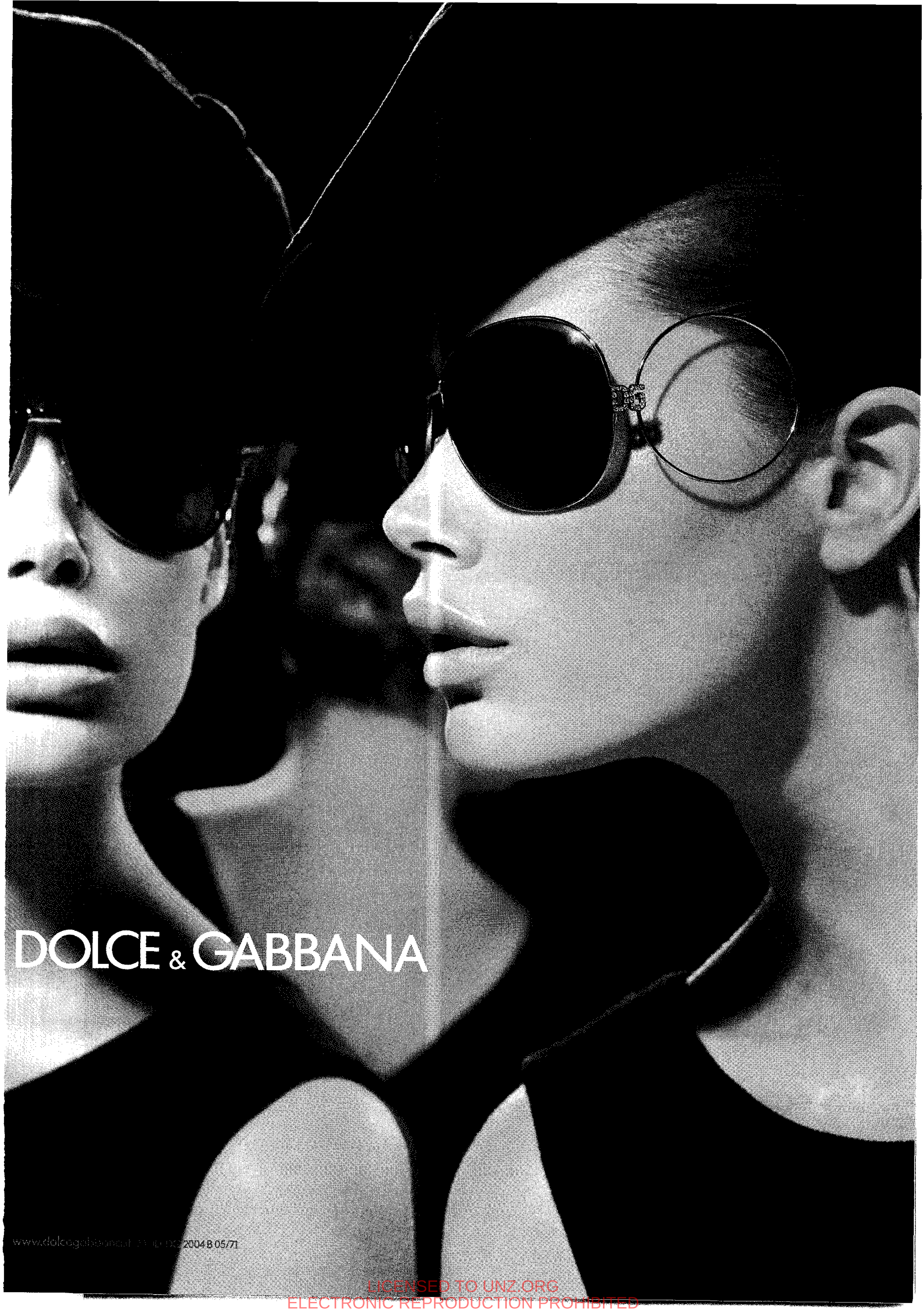
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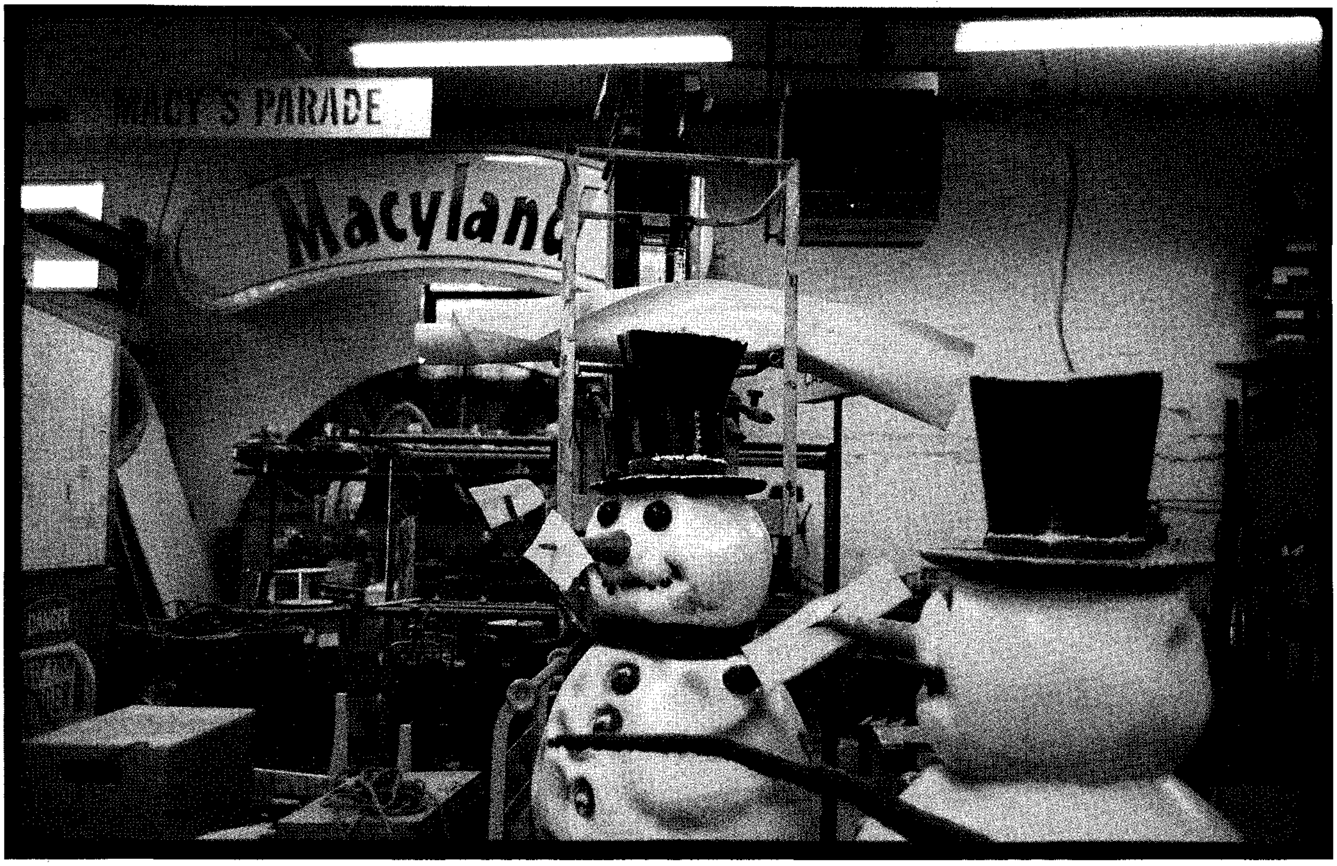

Macy's warehouse, before the Thanksgiving Day parade. Photograph by Sylvia Plachy.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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THIS WEEK

THE THEATRE
HIP REPLACEMENT

In "His Royal Hipness Lord Buckley in the Zam Zam Room," Jake Broder pays homage to the cult performer Richard (Lord) Buckley, who enjoyed a vogue in the fifties on the strength of long, rambling monologues delivered in his trademark "hipsemantic" style. The paragon of cool before his death, in 1960, he influenced acts as diverse as Lenny Bruce and the Beatles. Broder spins some of Buckley's most famous tales, against a backdrop of live jazz. (See page 33.)

NIGHT LIFE
YOU REALLY GOT ME

Ray Davies, the combustible Kinks songwriter, was shot in the leg last year while chasing a mugger in New Orleans, but that hasn't stopped him from releasing an EP to benefit the city, "Thanksgiving Day." The Monday following the holiday, he makes a rare U.S. appearance at the Supper Club. (See page 40.)

ART
ACROSS THE PARK

Ed Ruscha's painting installation "Course of Empire" went on view at the Whitney last week. Fans who want a little extra context can also pay a visit to the New-York Historical Society, where Thomas Cole's 1836 cycle of paintings—titled "The Course of Empire" and a touchstone for Ruscha's work—is in the permanent collection. (See page 41.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
WILD NIGHT

Earl Wild, the Romantic pianist par excellence, celebrates his ninetieth birthday with a concert at Carnegie Hall in which he brings his astonishing technique to music by Beethoven, Chopin, and Liszt. (See page 48.)

MOVIES
HOLD THE STUFFING

As Oscar-primed fare starts appearing on screens, BAM finds room for serious fun with "Spaghetti for Thanksgiving," a series of four Italian Westerns made between 1966 and 1973, including "My Name Is Nobody," co-directed by Tonino Valerii and Sergio Leone and starring Henry Fonda, and "The Fighting Fists of Shanghai Joe," Mario Caiano's kung-fu Western with Chen Lee and Klaus Kinski. (See page 56.)

THERE'S METHOD BEHIND
THE MASTERPIECE

The Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative provides gifted individuals with a whole year in which to learn, create and grow under a recognized master in their field. Mario Vargas Llosa, the distinguished Peruvian man of letters, chose young Colombian writer Antonio García Ángel. Five long years since his first novel, thanks to the discipline of Vargas Llosa's inspirational tutelage, García Ángel has completed his second.

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DANCE	**FILM**	**LITERATURE**	**MUSIC**	**THEATER**	**VISUAL ARTS**
SABURO TESHIGAWARA	MIRA NAIR	MARIO VARGAS LLOSA	JESSYE NORMAN	SIR PETER HALL	DAVID HOCKNEY
JUNAID JEMAL SENDI	ADITYA ASSARAT	ANTONIO GARCÍA ÁNGEL	SUSAN PLATTS	LARA FOOT NEWTON	MATTHIAS WEISCHER

NEW YORK

HOLIDAY EVENTS

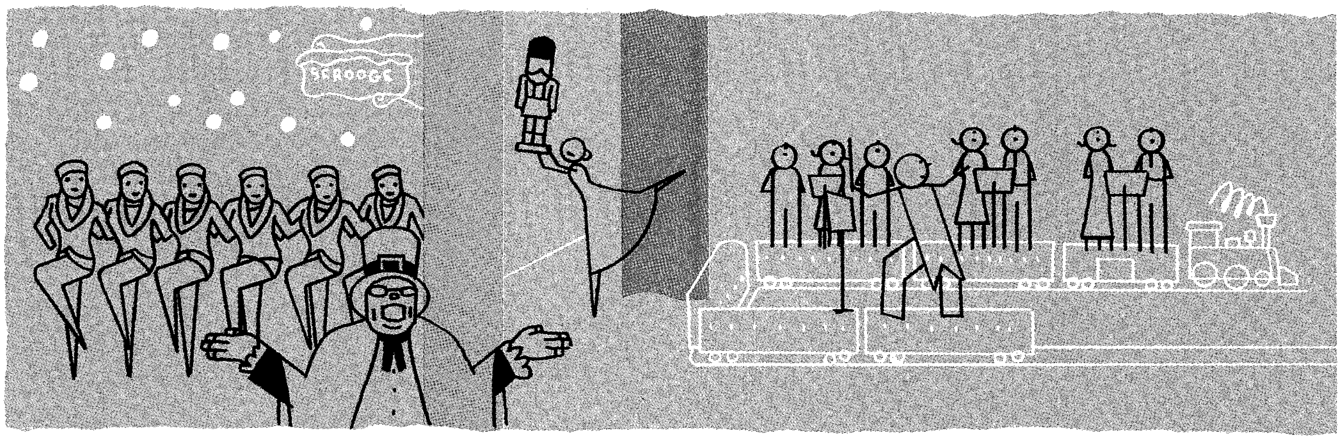
"THE RADIO CITY CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR"
This season, the Rockettes show off a glitzy new number, "Deck the Hall," and perform old favorites, like "Parade of the Wooden Soldiers," in which they fall in a wavelike domino effect. Pyrotechnics include Santa Claus's sleigh ride over a three-dimensional image of modern-day Manhattan shown on a gigantic L.E.D. screen, but the show still closes with humble, real animals—three camels, six sheep, two donkeys, and a horse—in "Living Nativity." (As of press time, the show was being performed to prerecorded music because of a labor dispute involving the house musicians.) (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 212-247-4777. Through Jan. 2.)

"THE NUTCRACKER"
New York City Ballet will perform Balanchine's classic version of E. T. A. Hoffmann's fairy tale about a little girl and her magical doll, which was created for the company in 1954. (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 212-870-5570. Through Dec. 30.) ♦ In "The Yorkville Nutcracker," Dances Patrelle's show at the Kaye Playhouse, the year is 1895, and the setting is a magical New York City; the young Mary—as she's called in this version—attends a party at Gracie Mansion with her father, the Mayor, only to be carried away by sleigh to the Central Park skating pond in a snowstorm, and the Land of the Sweets is set in the New York Botanical Gardens. The Sugarplum Fairy in this tenth-anniversary edition will be danced by Jenifer Ringer, a principal at the N.Y.C.B., and three young girls are alternating in the role of Mary. (Park Ave. at 68th St. 212-772-4448. Dec. 9 at 6, Dec. 10 at 2 and 7, and Dec. 11 at 1 and 6.) ♦ New York Theatre Ballet's one-hour condensed version of "The Nutcracker," introduced by the jovial Dan Renkin (who also plays Herr Drosselmeier) and inspired by the nineteenth-century English "toy theatres"—engraved illustrations that children could cut out and mount plays with—is particularly suitable for young children. Clara will be performed by Elizabeth Portnoy, an apprentice with the company. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 212-307-4100. Dec. 3-18.)

TREES
The American Museum of Natural History's origami tree, which is adorned this year with paper owls, doves, dragonflies, butterflies, and bats, goes on display on Nov. 22 in Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Hall. (Central Park W. at 79th St. 212-769-5100.) ♦ Nov. 22 at 7: The Metropolitan Museum unveils its Christmas tree, which is decorated with eighteenth-century angels and cherubs. It also has a Neapolitan baroque crèche at its base. The museum holds a lighting ceremony on Fridays and Saturdays at 7. (Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-535-7710. Through Jan. 8.) ♦ Nov. 25 at 6: The South Street Seaport lights its fifty-foot holiday tree with the help of the Big Apple Chorus, which will also be appearing on Fridays at 6 and 7 and on Saturdays and Sundays at 3 and 4 through Dec. 24. (Fulton St. at Water St. 212-732-7678.) ♦ Nov. 28 at 5:30: The soprano Denyce Graves and the Broadway veteran Barbara Cook join the acrobat Sergey Akimov, from the Big Apple Circus, at the lighting of Lincoln Center's holiday conifer. (Fountain Plaza. 212-875-5456.) ♦ Nov. 30 at 7: Sheryl Crow, Rod Stewart, Brian Wilson, and the Rockettes are among the stars who will appear at the seventy-third annual Rockefeller Center tree-lighting ceremony. (Fifth Ave. at 50th St.)

HANUKKAH
For eight evenings starting on Dec. 25 at 5:30, a new lamp will be lit atop the thirty-two-foot-tall menorah ("the largest permitted by Jewish law," according to Rabbi Shmuel M. Butman, the director of the Lubavitch Youth Organization) at Fifth Ave. at 59th St. There will be hot latkes and live music on the first and last nights. (For more information, call 212-736-8400. Through Jan. 1. Note that the lightings are at 3:30 on Friday the 30th and at 7:30 on Saturday the 31st.)

"A CHRISTMAS CAROL"
Theatreworks' musical based on the Dickens classic. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 212-279-4200. Dec. 9-31.)



LAURENT CILLUFFO

"THE LAST CHRISTMAS OF EBENEZER SCROOGE"
Marvin Kaye's play, based on his novel, begins where "A Christmas Carol" leaves off, on the morning after Scrooge's evening of nightmarish epiphany. (78th Street Theatre Lab, 236 W. 78th St. 212-362-9014. Dec. 1-17.)

"'TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE THE TWELVE DAYS OF A NUT CRACKER CHRISTMAS CAROL"
In a downtown dance-and-theatre spectacular, "A Christmas Carol" is performed to the backdrop of Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker" score, which is interwoven with a reading of the children's classic "'Twas the Night Before Christmas" and a choral performance of "The Twelve Days of Christmas." (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave. 212-352-3101. Dec. 15-23.)

"A VERY BETTE CHRISTMAS"
A new play with music by Elizabeth Fuller, whose book "Me & Jezebel" chronicled the month during which Bette Davis, because of a hotel strike, stayed at Fuller's house and ended up running it. The play imagines a 1962 TV Christmas special starring Davis. With the impersonator Tommy Femia; directed by Mark S. Graham. (Don't Tell Mama, 343 W. 46th St. 212-757-0788. Nov. 17-Jan. 8.)

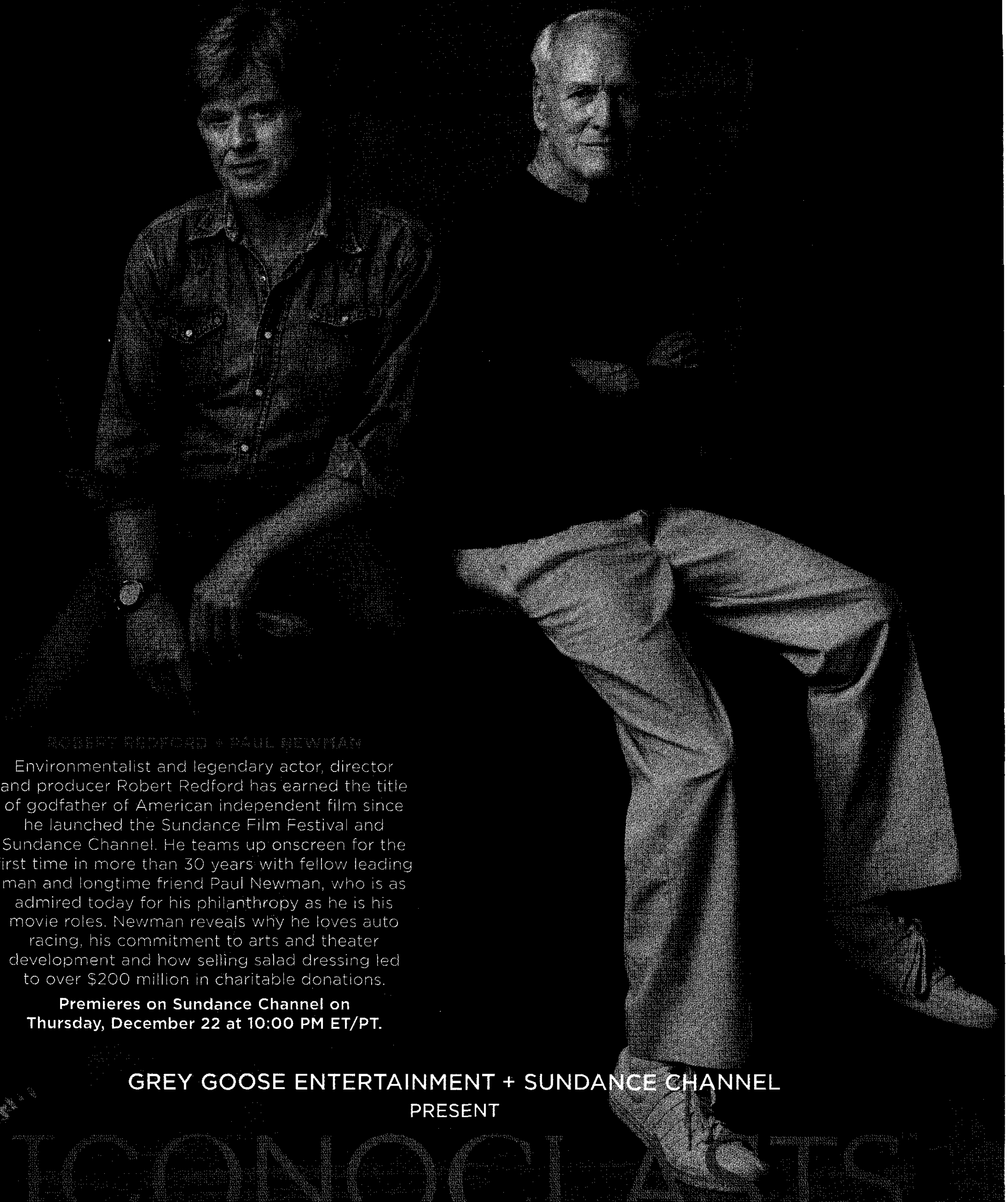
HOLIDAY TRAIN SHOW
Yankee Stadium is soon to be replaced with a more modern structure, but the House That Ruth Built is being rebuilt this season in the Bronx, albeit out of leaves, twigs, bark, and other natural materials. It is one of the many historic replicas—which include the Brooklyn Bridge, the Apollo Theatre, and the mansions of the Hudson River Valley—that grace the garden-gauge model-railroad layout at the New York Botanical Garden. (Bronx Park. 718-817-8700. Nov. 19-Jan. 8.)

CENTRAL PARK CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
In the nineteenth century, there was a popular Christmas tradition called the "side hunt," in which a party would split into two groups and go off hunting. Whichever group brought back the most game was considered the winner. This troubled an ornithologist named Frank Chapman, and in 1900 he instituted what he hoped would become a new ritual, a Christmas bird count. Twenty-seven like-minded souls across North America engaged in the first count that year. Expect a slightly larger turnout in Central Park. (Dec. 18. For more information, call 212-360-1324.)

HOLIDAY MUSIC—CLASSICAL

"MESSIAH"
St. Thomas Church, an Episcopal establishment that boasts not only the finest church choir in New York but also a building designed in an unusually grand form of American Gothic, has traditionally offered the city's flagship performances of Handel's "entertainment" on Christian themes. The soloists include the soprano Ellen Hargis, the tenor Marc Molomot, and the baritone Thomas Meglioranza, along with the renowned English countertenor James Bowman—the man on whom Andreas Scholl modelled his own silvery voice. John Scott conducts. (Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. 212-664-9360. Dec. 13 and Dec. 15 at 7:30.) ♦ In recent years, St. Thomas has had some serious competition from the New York Philharmonic, which sends forth approximately half of its players to perform the task, usually under the command of an eminent British conductor; this year it's Richard Hickox, making his début. Three of the vocal soloists—Christine Brandes, Sara Mingardo, and Mark Tucker—are also making their Philharmonic débuts; the bass-baritone is the trusty Met star John Relyea. With the Westminster Symphonic Choir. (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. 212-875-5656. Dec. 14-15 at 7:30 and Dec. 16-17 at 8.) ♦ Another excellent "Messiah" has traditionally come from Richard Westenburg's Musica Sacra ensemble; this year's soloists are a promising crew that features the City Opera star soprano Lisa Saffer and the countertenor Michael Chance. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Dec. 18 and Dec. 20 at 8.)

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
The orchestra offers other holiday concerts at its home base, Avery Fisher Hall, beginning with a "Holiday Brass" spectacular featuring the Philharmonic's Principal Brass Quintet and the popular Canadian Brass. (Dec. 11 at 3.) ♦ The charismatic soprano Angela Gheorghiu, making her Philharmonic début, is the special guest for this year's New Year's Eve concert, in which Lorin Maazel will conduct operatic selections by Rossini, Catalani ("Ebben? Ne andrò lontana," from "La Wally"), Mascagni, Verdi, and Puccini (arias from "Madama Butterfly" and "La Rondine"). (Dec. 31 at 8.) (212-875-5656.)



ROBERT REDFORD + PAUL NEWMAN

Environmentalist and legendary actor, director and producer Robert Redford has earned the title of godfather of American independent film since he launched the Sundance Film Festival and Sundance Channel. He teams up onscreen for the first time in more than 30 years with fellow leading man and longtime friend Paul Newman, who is as admired today for his philanthropy as he is his movie roles. Newman reveals why he loves auto racing, his commitment to arts and theater development and how selling salad dressing led to over $200 million in charitable donations.

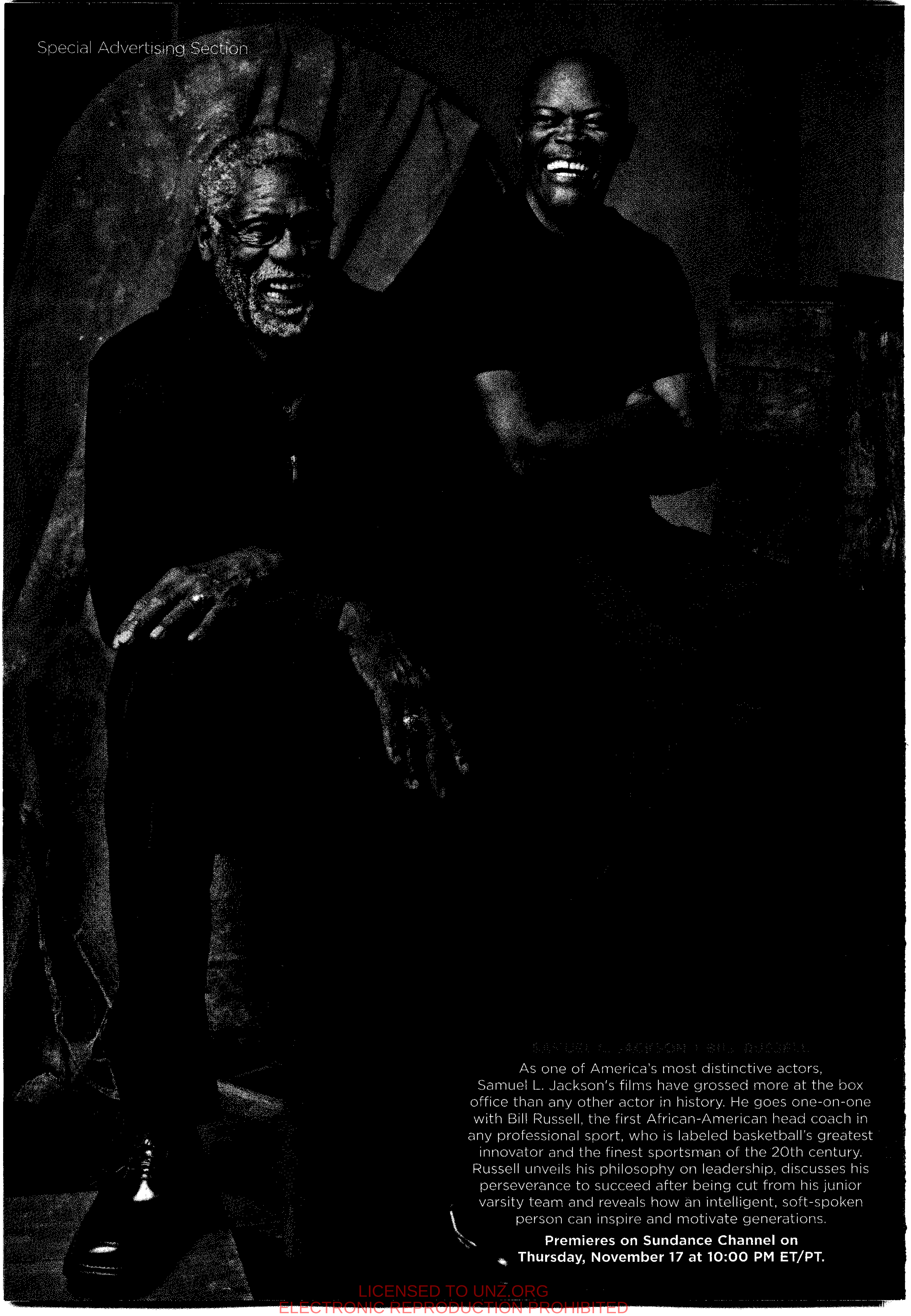
Premieres on Sundance Channel on Thursday, December 22 at 10:00 PM ET/PT.

GREY GOOSE ENTERTAINMENT + SUNDANCE CHANNEL
PRESENT

ICONOCLASTS

Premiering in November, a series of intimate, unpredictable portraits of ground shakers who have transformed our culture through their passions. Get an inside look at their lives from fellow creative pioneers, and discover how their work has raised the bar on excellence.

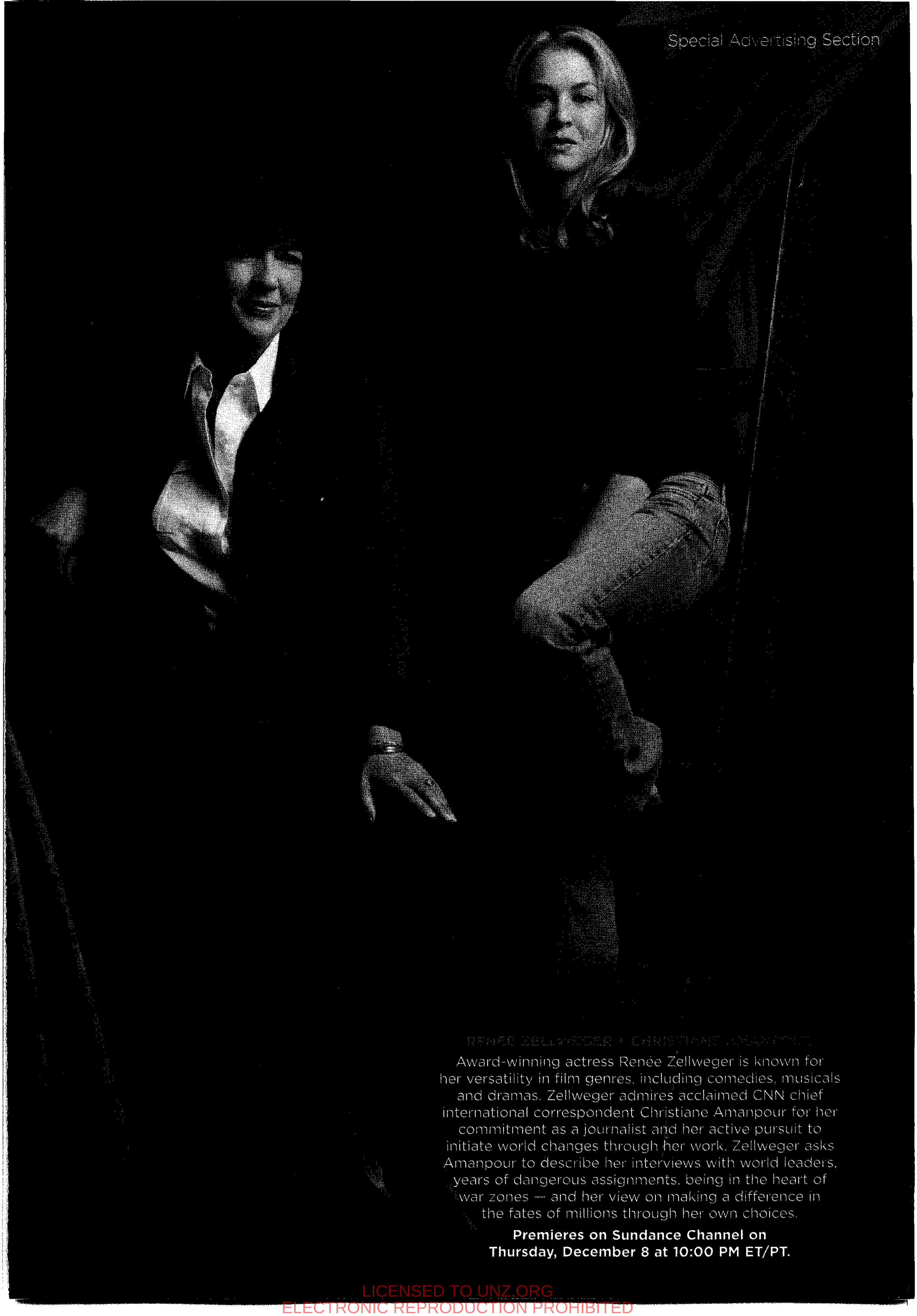
PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARK SELIGER



SAMUEL L. JACKSON | BILL RUSSELL

As one of America's most distinctive actors, Samuel L. Jackson's films have grossed more at the box office than any other actor in history. He goes one-on-one with Bill Russell, the first African-American head coach in any professional sport, who is labeled basketball's greatest innovator and the finest sportsman of the 20th century. Russell unveils his philosophy on leadership, discusses his perseverance to succeed after being cut from his junior varsity team and reveals how an intelligent, soft-spoken person can inspire and motivate generations.

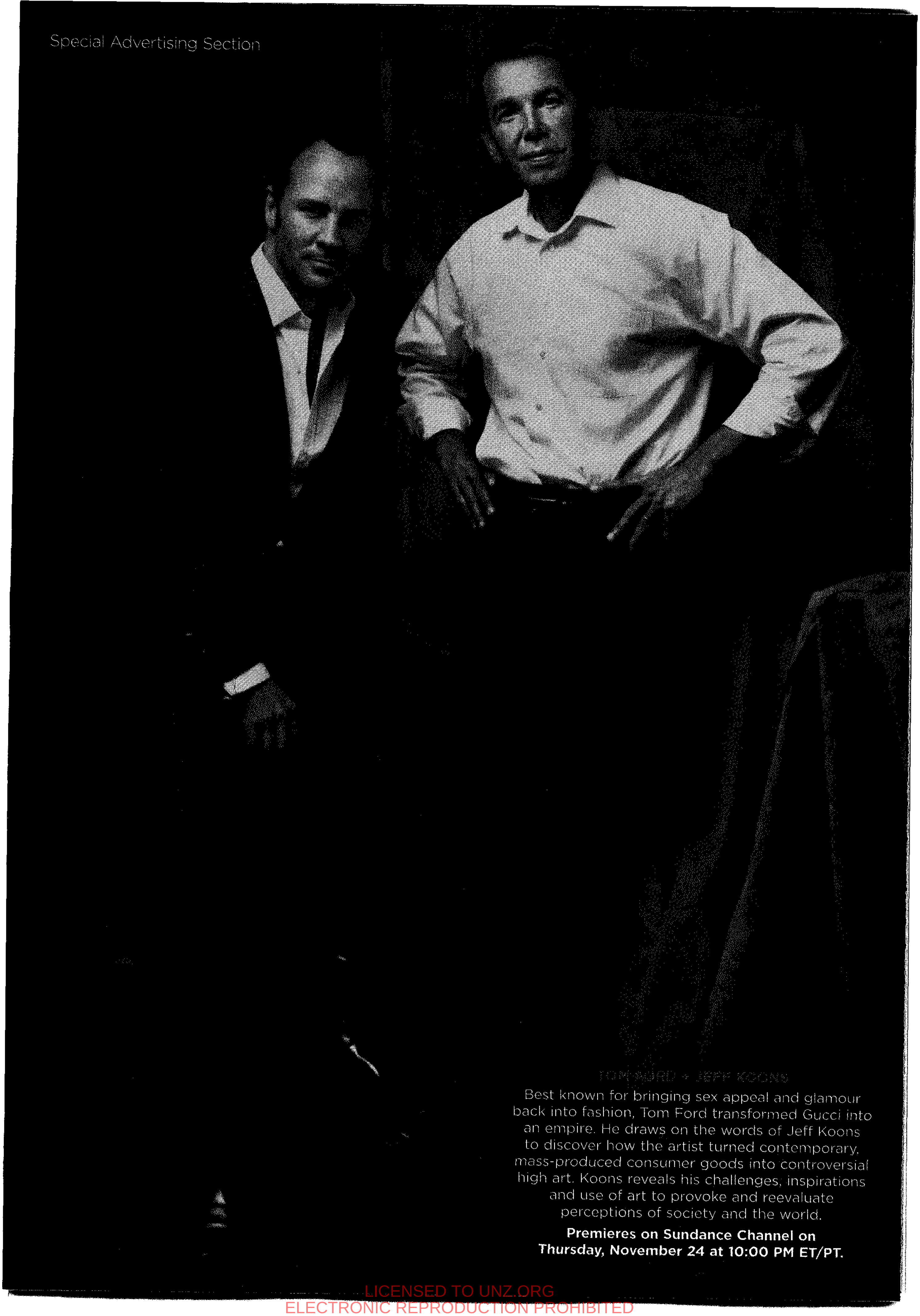
Premieres on Sundance Channel on Thursday, November 17 at 10:00 PM ET/PT.



RENÉE ZELLWEGER + CHRISTIANE AMANPOUR

Award-winning actress Renée Zellweger is known for her versatility in film genres, including comedies, musicals and dramas. Zellweger admires acclaimed CNN chief international correspondent Christiane Amanpour for her commitment as a journalist and her active pursuit to initiate world changes through her work. Zellweger asks Amanpour to describe her interviews with world leaders, years of dangerous assignments, being in the heart of war zones — and her view on making a difference in the fates of millions through her own choices.

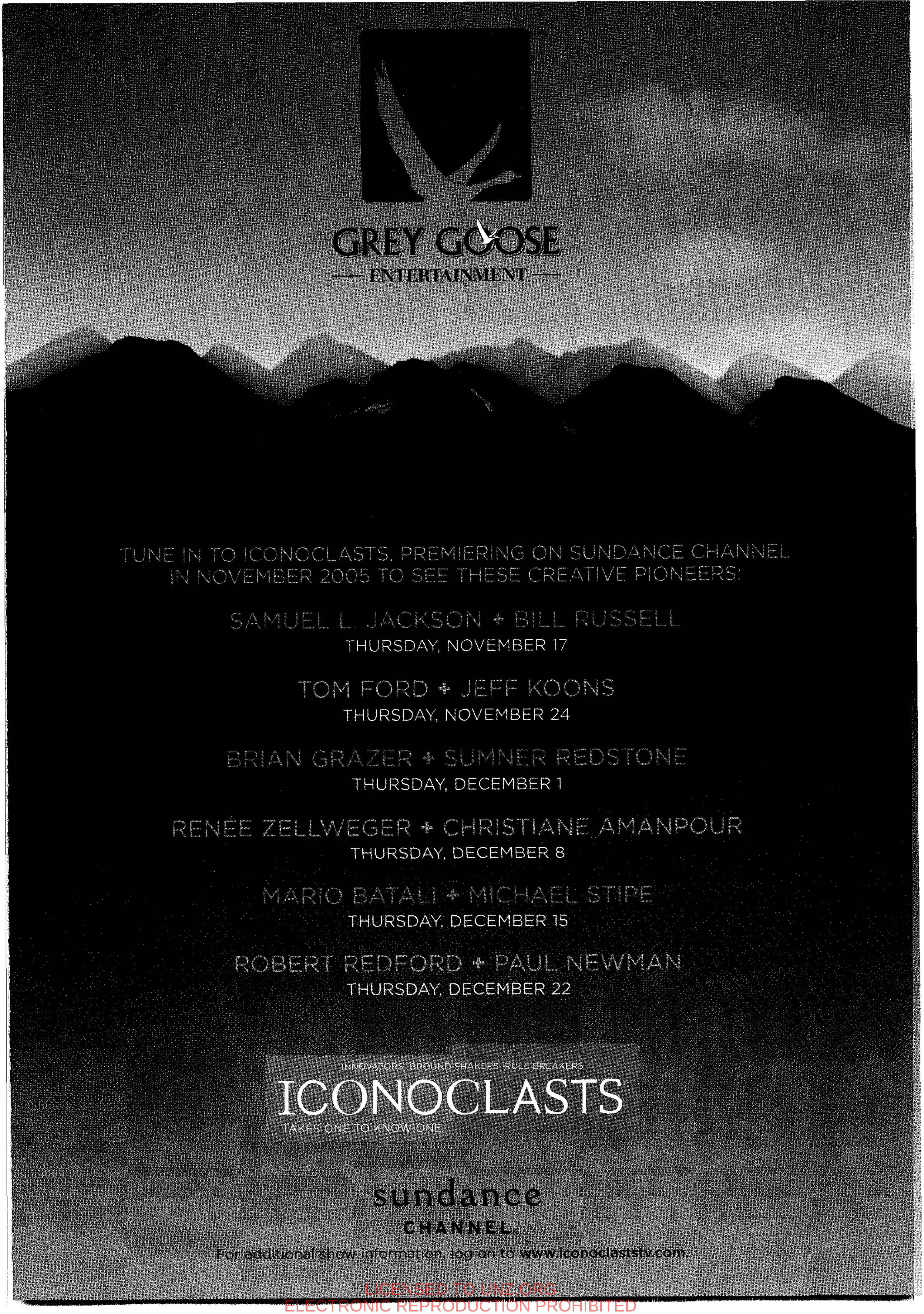
Premieres on Sundance Channel on Thursday, December 8 at 10:00 PM ET/PT.



TOM FORD + JEFF KOONS

Best known for bringing sex appeal and glamour back into fashion, Tom Ford transformed Gucci into an empire. He draws on the words of Jeff Koons to discover how the artist turned contemporary, mass-produced consumer goods into controversial high art. Koons reveals his challenges, inspirations and use of art to provoke and reevaluate perceptions of society and the world.

Premieres on Sundance Channel on Thursday, November 24 at 10:00 PM ET/PT.



GREY GOOSE
ENTERTAINMENT

TUNE IN TO ICONOCLASTS, PREMIERING ON SUNDANCE CHANNEL
IN NOVEMBER 2005 TO SEE THESE CREATIVE PIONEERS:

SAMUEL L. JACKSON + BILL RUSSELL
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17

TOM FORD + JEFF KOONS
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24

BRIAN GRAZER + SUMNER REDSTONE
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1

RENÉE ZELLWEGER + CHRISTIANE AMANPOUR
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8

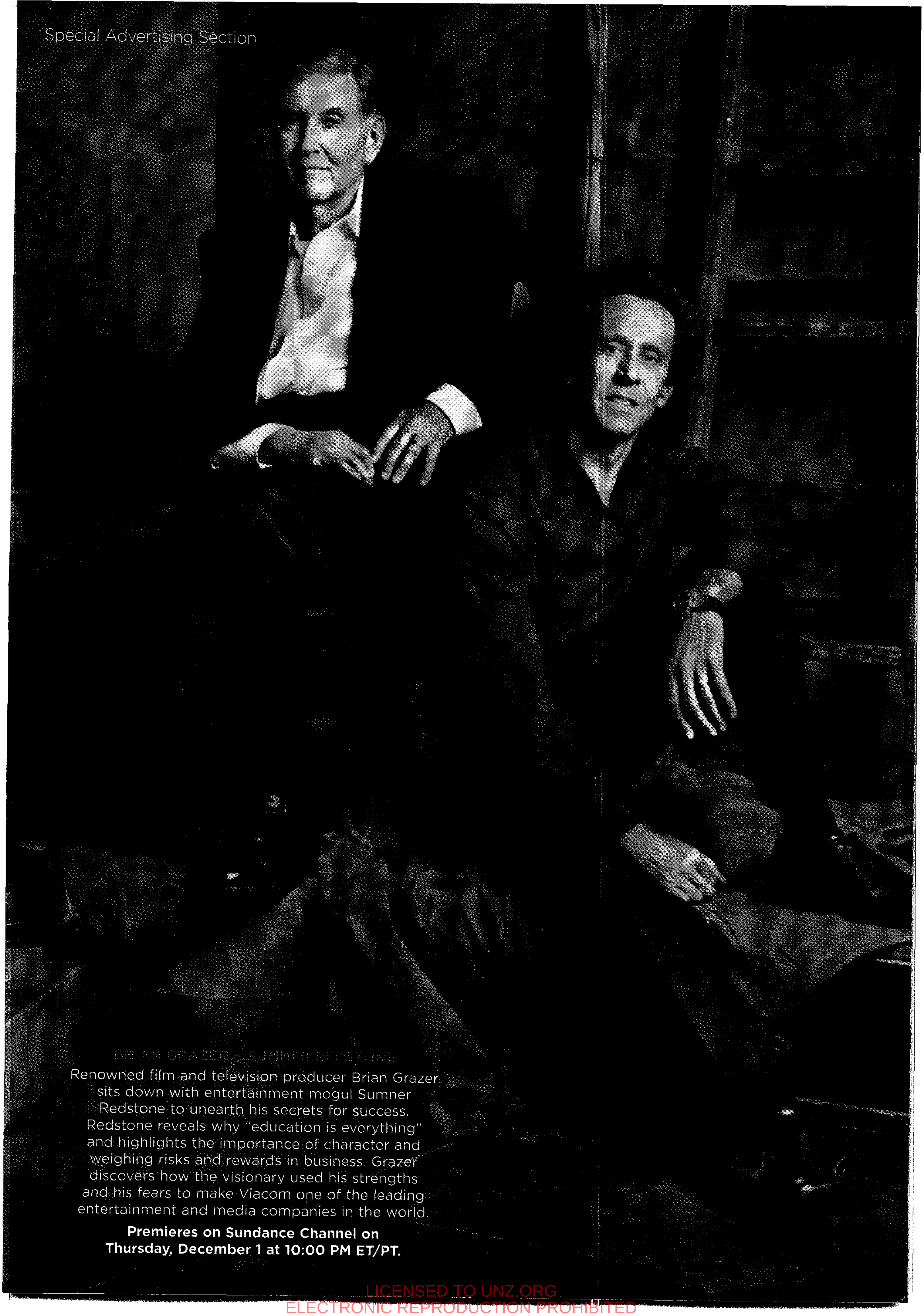
MARIO BATALI + MICHAEL STIPE
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15

ROBERT REDFORD + PAUL NEWMAN
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22

INNOVATORS. GROUND SHAKERS. RULE BREAKERS.
ICONOCLASTS
TAKES ONE TO KNOW ONE

sundance
CHANNEL.

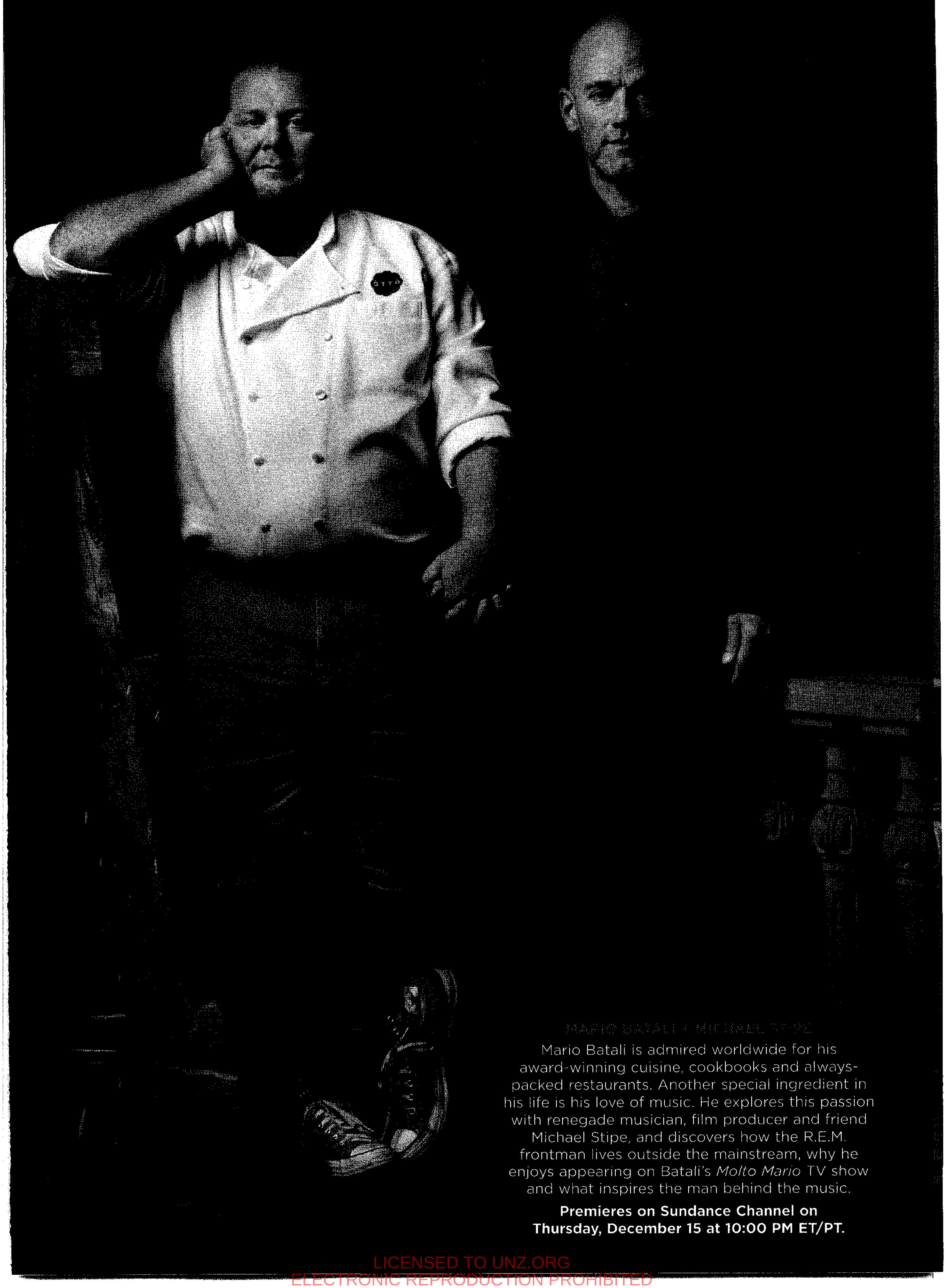
For additional show information, log on to **www.iconoclaststv.com.**



BRIAN GRAZER & SUMNER REDSTONE

Renowned film and television producer Brian Grazer sits down with entertainment mogul Sumner Redstone to unearth his secrets for success. Redstone reveals why "education is everything" and highlights the importance of character and weighing risks and rewards in business. Grazer discovers how the visionary used his strengths and his fears to make Viacom one of the leading entertainment and media companies in the world.

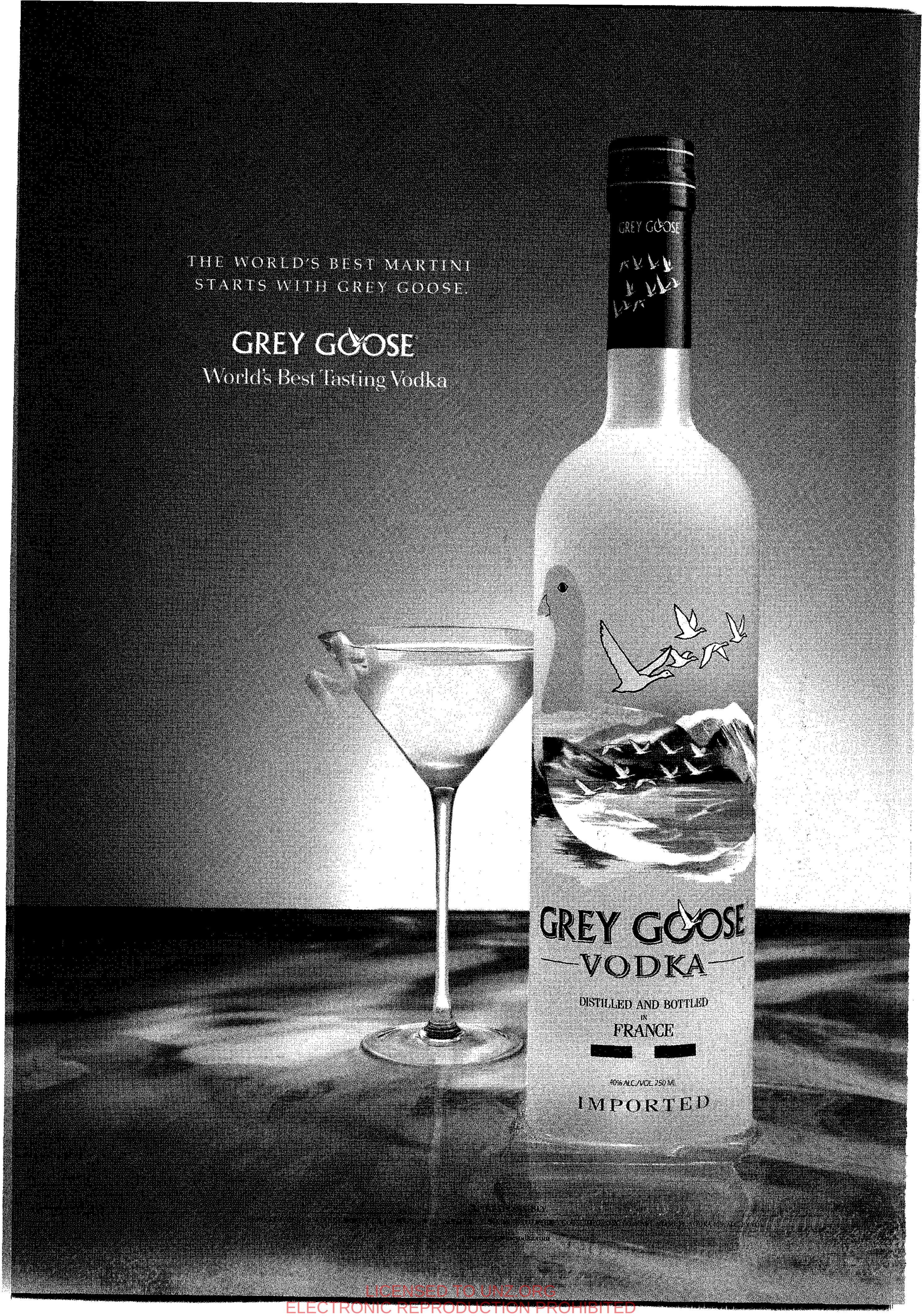
Premieres on Sundance Channel on Thursday, December 1 at 10:00 PM ET/PT.



MARIO BATALI + MICHAEL STIPE

Mario Batali is admired worldwide for his award-winning cuisine, cookbooks and always-packed restaurants. Another special ingredient in his life is his love of music. He explores this passion with renegade musician, film producer and friend Michael Stipe, and discovers how the R.E.M. frontman lives outside the mainstream, why he enjoys appearing on Batali's *Molto Mario* TV show and what inspires the man behind the music.

Premieres on Sundance Channel on Thursday, December 15 at 10:00 PM ET/PT.


THE WORLD'S BEST MARTINI STARTS WITH GREY GOOSE.
GREY GOOSE
World's Best Tasting Vodka
GREY GOOSE
GREY GOOSE
VODKA
DISTILLED AND BOTTLED IN FRANCE
40% ALC./VOL. 750 ML
IMPORTED

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
To hear a Christmas concert amidst the intimate grandeur of the Museum's Medieval Sculpture Hall is a classic New York experience that should not be missed. Dec. 1 and Dec. 4 at 6:30 and 8:30: "A Chanticleer Christmas," an always popular holiday program offered by the matchless male chorus from San Francisco, features not only their exciting renditions of spirituals but also works by Byrd, Victoria, Howells, and Pärt—along with César Cui's "Magnificat," Op. 93, a rarity if there ever was one. ♦ Dec. 12 at 6:30 and 8:30: A quiet evening of songs and carols, from the baritone Jubilant Sykes and the guitarist Christopher Parkening. (212-570-3949. For a complete listing of concerts at the museum and at the Cloisters, see www.metmuseum.org.)

BARGEMUSIC
The doughty floating chamber-music series has some traditions of its own, centering on Bach. Dec. 24 at 7:30: Steven Beck, one of the city's most admired young pianists, offers the Goldberg Variations on the barge's Steinway grand. ♦ Dec. 31 at 7:30: The violinist Mark Peskanov leads a band of barge regulars (including the brothers Colin and Eric Jacobsen, on violin and cello, and the flutist Michael Parloff) in a concert including the Brandenburg Concertos Nos. 2, 4, and 5 and the Violin Concerto in A Minor. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

NEW YORK STRING ORCHESTRA
Carnegie Hall's proud holiday tradition, a convocation of young virtuosos under the leadership of the violinist and conductor Jaime Laredo. Dec. 24 at 7: An all-Mozart evening with the pianist Jonathan Biss includes the Piano Concerto No. 21 in C Major and the "Posthorn" Serenade. ♦ Dec. 28 at 8: The violinist Hilary Hahn joins the musicians for a program featuring Bach's Concerto for Two Violins in D Minor, Barber's "Adagio for Strings," and Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. (212-247-7800.)

MORE HOLIDAY MUSIC

"HIP HOP HOLIDAY"
The Zimbabwean expat Akim Funk Buddha kicks off the season with a two-night celebration (see Night Life). (BAM Café, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 718-636-4139. Nov. 25-26.)

"SNOWBIZ"
Betty, the fearless pop-rock-cabaret band led by Elizabeth Ziff, Alyson Palmer, and Amy Ziff, rings in the holidays at Joe's Pub. (425 Lafayette St. 212-539-8777. Dec. 8-10.)

WINTER SOLSTICE
Paul Winter's annual show celebrates the changing of the seasons. The performers include Russian village singers and dancers from the Dmitri Pokrovsky Ensemble and African-American dancers and drummers from the Forces of Nature company, as well as the double-reed player Paul McCandless, who was an original member of Winter's Consort and will be joining him for the first time in twenty years. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 866-468-7619. Dec. 15-17.)

"RED HOT HOLIDAY STOMP"
Wynton Marsalis and members of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra bring a little New Orleans spice to the season. They'll be joined by Wycliffe Gordon, Don Vappie, Joe Temperley, Victor Goins, and others. (Rose Theatre, Broadway at 60th St. 212-721-6500. Dec. 15-18.)

"Z-100 JINGLE BALL"
Kanye West, Shakira, Sean Paul, Ludacris, Fall Out Boy, and other pop-music stars turn out for a night of holiday cheer. (Madison Square Garden. 212-307-7171. Dec. 16.)

"RONNIE SPECTOR'S XMAS PARTY"
The rock legend holds her very own holiday spectacular. (B. B. King Blues Club & Grill, 237 W. 42nd St. 212-997-4144. Dec. 16-17.)

"BENDING TOWARDS THE LIGHT"
The trombonist Slide Hampton, the tap dancer Jimmy Slyde, the Latin-jazz flutist Dave Valentin, the singer Dee Daniels, and other musicians perform a jazz nativity, which has been a New York tradition for twenty years now. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. Dec. 20-21.)

"WHAT I LIKE ABOUT JEW"
This musical review, created by Sean Altman and Rob Tannenbaum, takes a slightly different look at the most wonderful time of the year: its Christmas Eve and Christmas Day shows feature "Reuben the Hook-Nosed Reindeer," "(It's Good to Be) A Jew at Christmas," and other future holiday classics. The guests this year include Tammy Faye Starlite, Jackie Hoffman, Cindy Kaplan, and Todd Barry. (The Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. 212-219-3055.)

"HOLIDAY SWING BALL"
Three headlining bands—Nick Palumbo & the Flipped Fedoras, Ron Sunshine & Full Swing, and Eight to the Bar—provide a bit of post-Christmas dance relief. (Avalon, 47 W. 20th St. 212-807-7780. Dec. 28.)

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

ABIGAIL'S PARTY
The New Group ("Avenue Q") presents the New York première of Mike Leigh's biting satire of British suburbia in the seventies, starring Jennifer Jason Leigh. Scott Elliott directs. In previews. (Acorn, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

CELEBRATION / THE ROOM
Neil Pepe directs two plays by the Nobel laureate Harold Pinter as part of the Atlantic Theatre Company's twentieth-anniversary season. "Celebration," from 1999, is about a wedding anniversary in a trendy restaurant, and "The Room," Pinter's first play, is set in a one-room London flat. In previews. (336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200.)

CHITA RIVERA: THE DANCER'S LIFE
Rivera, along with a cast of ten, stars in a musical about her life and career, touching on shows by Jerome Robbins, Leonard Bernstein, and Bob Fosse. With a book by Terrence McNally and original songs by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty. Directed and choreographed by Graciela Daniele. In previews. (Shoenfeld, 236 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

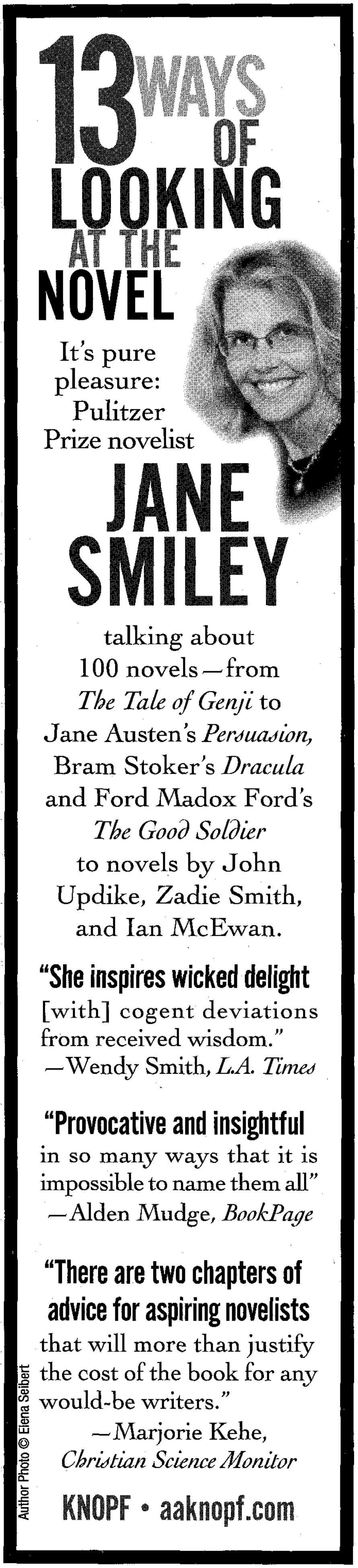
THE COLOR PURPLE
A new musical based on Alice Walker's novel, with a book by Marsha Norman and music and lyrics by Brenda Russell, Allee Willis, and Stephen Bray. In previews. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 212-239-6200.)

HIS ROYAL HIPNESS LORD BUCKLEY IN THE ZAM ZAM ROOM
Jake Broder embodies the cult humorist Lord Buckley, in a play that incorporates several of Buckley's famous routines, set to live jazz accompaniment. Previews begin Nov. 25. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF PIER PAOLO PASOLINI
This play by Michel Azama explores the tumultuous life of the Italian poet and filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini, who was murdered by a young male prostitute in 1975. In previews. Opens Nov. 25. (Abingdon Theatre, 312 W. 36th St. 212-868-4444.)

MISS WITHERSPOON
In a new play by Christopher Durang ("Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You"), Kristine Nielsen stars as a sardonic dead woman who is repeatedly reincarnated, much to her chagrin. Directed by Emily Mann. In previews. Opens Nov. 29. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

THE OTHER SIDE
Manhattan Theatre Club presents Ariel Dorfman's story about a couple living on the border of two war-ravaged countries as they await the return of their son, who ran away thirty years earlier. In previews. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)



13 WAYS OF LOOKING AT THE NOVEL

It's pure pleasure: Pulitzer Prize novelist

JANE SMILEY

talking about 100 novels—from *The Tale of Genji* to Jane Austen's *Persuasion,* Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier* to novels by John Updike, Zadie Smith, and Ian McEwan.

"She inspires wicked delight [with] cogent deviations from received wisdom."
—Wendy Smith, *L.A. Times*

"Provocative and insightful in so many ways that it is impossible to name them all"
—Alden Mudge, *BookPage*

"There are two chapters of advice for aspiring novelists that will more than justify the cost of the book for any would-be writers."
—Marjorie Kehe, *Christian Science Monitor*

Author Photo © Elena Seibert

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ROPE
The Drama Dept. presents the play that the Alfred Hitchcock movie was based on, about two Oxford students who commit a murder to prove they can get away with it. In previews. (Zipper, 336 W. 37th St. 212-239-6200.)

TEAHOUSE
Beijing People's Art Theatre mounts a revival of Lao She's play from 1958, about the lives of a Beijing teahouse owner and his customers between 1898 and 1948. In Mandarin with English subtitles. Nov. 27-Dec. 1. (Michael Schimmel Center for the Arts, at Pace University, 3 Spruce St. 212-202-0657.)

A TOUCH OF THE POET
Gabriel Byrne stars as Cornelius Melody, an Irish immigrant who poses as a gentleman in Boston circa 1828, in a Roundabout Theatre production of the Eugene O'Neill play. In previews. (Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-719-1300.)

THE TRIP TO BOUNTIFUL
Signature Theatre Company presents Horton Foote's play about a strong-willed sixty-year-old woman (Lois Smith) who escapes her stifling life in Houston and embarks on a journey to return to her girlhood home in a small Texas town. Harris Yulin directs. In previews. (Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529.)

NOW PLAYING

ABSURD PERSON SINGULAR
Alan Ayckbourn's 1973 hit has been revived by the Manhattan Theatre Club, under the skillful direction of John Tillinger. The play, which exposes a bevy of oafish, parochial, bourgeois narcissists, takes place in three kitchens over a series of three successive Christmas parties, in daft suburban England, beginning in the upwardly mobile household of Sidney (Alan Ruck) and Jane (the excellent Clea Lewis), as Jane manically polishes the surfaces of her prefab kitchen. Ayckbourn is expert at constructing funny stage pictures, but the play itself is stale, and the nuanced tableau of British snobbery is mostly lost on an American audience. Even for a bromide, "Absurd Person Singular" is weak stuff. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/31/05.) (Biltmore, 261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

ALMOST HEAVEN:
THE SONGS OF JOHN DENVER
It takes only a nudge to put John Denver's wistful folk ballads into the realm of soapy nostalgia, and Harold Thau's jukebox tribute does just that. A cast of six performs the Denver songbook, in an amorphous revue that draws on letters from fans and bullet points from the singer's autobiography, "Take Me Home." Only Jim Newman, who brings a toothy modesty to his portrayal of Denver, is able to transcend the prevailing spirit of forced good cheer. Directed by Randal Myler ("It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues"). (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 212-239-6200.)

A.W.O.L.
As part of the "Act French" festival, In Parentheses stages a visually arresting but often opaque adaptation of Olivier Cadiot's novel "Colonel Zoo," which depicts the fragmented ramblings of a delusional manservant (Steven Rattazzi). Here, the director, Marion Schoevaert, recasts Cadiot's raving Jeeves as an American bum and pits him against a phalanx of stone-faced Wall Street clones. Schoevaert's devices never quite mesh with the text, but they are well executed, and Rattazzi is able to realize his character's warped inner life using only a few cardboard boxes and a bag of empty soda cans. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200. Through Nov. 27.)

BACH AT LEIPZIG
In a play of big ideas and kaleidoscopic intricacy, Itamar Moses imagines a gaggle of musicians competing against Bach to become organ master of the Leipzig Thomaskirche in 1722. The play borrows its structure, self-consciously and with astounding precision, from that of a fugue, with the seven rival organists serving as melodic voices and their web of intrigue doubling as counterpoint. Moses has pulled off a nearly virtuosic feat, and if the punch lines don't always land no matter—they function merely as gears in an exquisite farcical machine. Pam MacKinnon directs. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200.)

BEYOND THE MIRROR
Shadow theatre, film, puppetry, and other performance media are used to recall the sociopolitical crises in Afghanistan over the past twenty years, in a production that originated in Kabul. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave. 212-254-1109.)

THE GENTLEMAN DANCING-MASTER
The Pearl presents the New York première of William Wycherley's Restoration satire about a pair of fops, one Spanish, the other French. Directed by Gus Kaikkonen. (80 St. Marks Pl. 212-598-9802.)

THE GREAT AMERICAN
TRAILER PARK MUSICAL
Joyful and unashamedly vulgar, Betsy Kelso's comic fable about women in a Florida trailer park and their no-account men is more fun than a chair-throwing episode of "Jerry Springer" set to music. When a stripper named Pippi (the incandescent Orfeh) moves into Armadillo Acres, on the run from a permanent-marker-sniffing loon named Duke, she gets sympathy from the park's ruling clique, Betty (Linda Hart, a bleached-blond Eartha Kitt with mighty lungs), Linoleum (Marya Grandy), and Pickles (the very funny Leslie Kritzer)—until she steals somebody's husband. The rousing songs, by David Nehls, include the ballad "I Gotta Make Like a Nail (and Press On)," which has the wattage of the disco hit "I Will Survive." The ingenious set is by Derek McLane ("I Am My Own Wife"). (Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200.)

HAMLET
Michael Cumpsty takes the title role and reunites with the director Brian Kulick. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 212-677-4210.)

HILDA
The devil favors blue linen in this play by the acclaimed French writer Marie Ndiaye, another entry in the "Act French" festival. The haute-bourgeois Mrs. Lemarchand (an astute Ellen Karas) wants more than just a nanny who will polish her floors and adore her children; she wants a creature to love, honor, and obey her. She attempts to get what she wants with Hilda, who remains offstage throughout the play. Paying off Hilda's chump of a husband, Frank (Michael Earle), Mrs. Lemarchand slowly takes possession of the unseen, mute prisoner. The enraged but ineffectual Frank barely has a chance to see Hilda, let alone liberate her. Ndiaye lays on the social satire with a heavy hand, inventing a consummate villainess without sufficient drama to contain her. Directed by Carey Perloff. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

IN MY LIFE
An inspired train wreck. The unwieldy brainchild of Joseph Brooks (the composer of "You Light Up My Life"), this musical concerns the sudden infatuation between J.T. (Christopher J. Hanke), a songwriter with Tourette's syndrome, and Jenny (Jessica Boevers), an editor of personal ads. Their romance blossoms in a series of overblown pop ballads and is presided over, for some reason, by a glittery gay angel (David Turner) dressed in a variety of stunningly tacky costumes. Flanked by choruses of dancing pirates, skeletons, and French courtiers, Turner manages a few moments of sly humor amid the brazenly incoherent camp spectacle. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

CLASSICAL NOTES
MOZART FOR CHRISTMAS

Nothing sells like Mozart, and, with the composer's two-hundred-and-fiftieth birthday approaching, it's no wonder that new disks are filling the stores in time for Christmas. But the first crop of releases includes something of a surprise: three world-renowned musicians have recorded Mozart's violin sonatas, works that have never been thought of as major repertory.

One of the three—Mitsuko Uchida—is a pianist, which reminds us that these works have been traditionally known as "Sonatas for Piano and Violin." She has recorded four of them on Philips with Mark Steinberg, the first violinist of the Brentano String Quartet, and the cover photograph shows Steinberg standing several paces behind his famous colleague. But there is real dialogue here, and a shared sensibility. Since Uchida produces her glowing sounds on a modern Steinway, volume and accents are smoothed away from the extremes, leaving Steinberg to inject some vivid colors and risky phrasings.

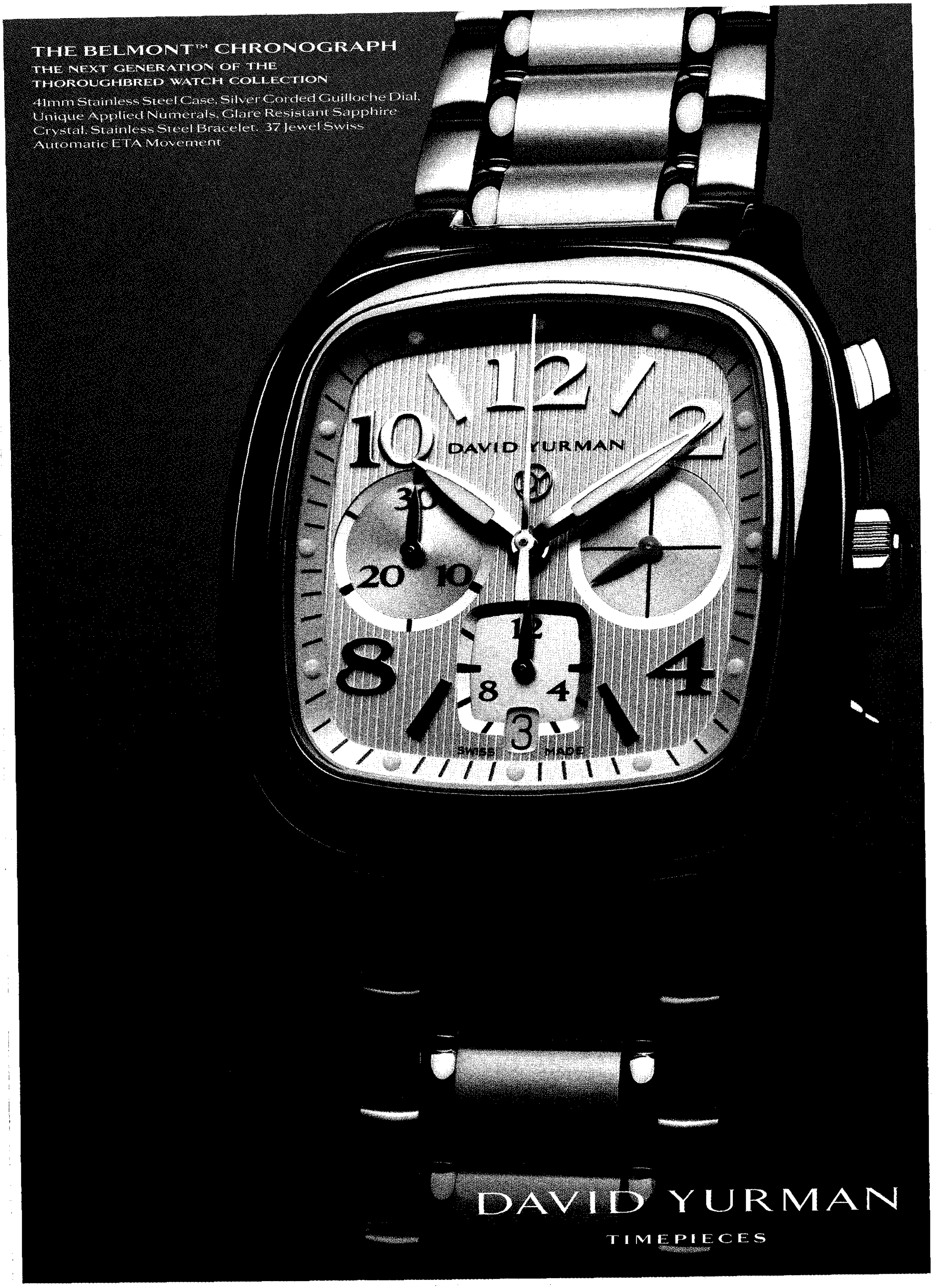
The second pair attempting the works has a more prominent string player: the violinist Andrew Manze, an early-music superstar, who has formed a powerful partnership with the fortepianist Richard Egarr on Harmonia Mundi. Egarr and Manze also begin with the Sonata in F Major, K. 377, but they use period instruments with less sustaining power, and they heighten every moment for maximum effect. Some passages have an infinite delicacy; others are almost brutally frank. And where Uchida and Steinberg give the theme-and-variations movement a Schubertian mixture of sadness and restraint, Manze and Egarr's account is full of the kind of irony and coy humor that abounds in Mozart's operas.

Finally, there's a new recording of the sonatas by the violinist Hilary Hahn and the pianist Natalie Zhu, on Deutsche Grammophon. Hahn's technically impeccable but expressively narrow artistry is no match for Steinberg in the K. 304 and K. 526 Sonatas. But the youthful spontaneity in Hahn and Zhu's playing of the radiant K. 376 Sonata is more appealing than Manze and Egarr's overcultivated elegance, and their performance of the lyrical little Sonata in G Major, K. 301, is undeniably affecting.

—Russell Platt

JERSEY BOYS
The latest entry in the jukebox sweepstakes, which tells the story of Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons (at the August Wilson, under the rollicking direction of Des McAnuff), looks to be a winner. The splendid actors—Christian Hoff, J. Robert Spencer, Daniel Reichard, and, especially, John Lloyd Young, as Valli—take turns narrating the group's rise from lower-class Jersey doo-woppers to Rock and Roll Hall of Famers, and they're as tight musically as they are persuasive dramatically. Marshall Brickman and Rick Elice have written a clever book; it sets up the songs with well-judged humor and the elegant strokes of observation that the Four Seasons' repertoire lacks. This is direct, pedal-to-the-metal stuff—the sound, as the show insists, of the working people. (11/14/05) (245 W. 52nd St. 212-239-6200.)

MR. MARMALADE
The Roundabout Theatre Company presents the New York première of Noah Haidle's comedy about adult behavior, as seen through the eyes of clever, acerbic children. Directed by Michael Greif. The cast includes Michael C. Hall ("Six Feet Under"). (Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300.)



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DAVID YURMAN
TIMEPIECES

NEW YORK BAL HARBOUR AMERICANA MANHASSET ATLANTA HOUSTON LAS VEGAS SOUTH COAST PLAZA

THE ODD COUPLE
In this revival, surprisingly, Neil Simon's enduring masterpiece loses some of its flavor. Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick hit Simon's notes, but they don't quite capture the music of his humor. The Oscar Madison described in the script is the quintessence of loosey-goosey, but Lane's nerviness is part of his campy comic appeal—you can put him in sneakers and drape his portly body in an unbuttoned shirt, but he still has the metabolism of a hamster. Thus, the nervous alertness that rightly belongs to the meticulous Felix has been usurped by Lane's snappy performance, and Broderick has no choice but to play against the attack of his co-star. The lack of animus in Broderick's sedate approach somehow lowers the heat in the argument. Still, it doesn't stop him from getting his share of laughs. (11/7/05) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 212-307-4100.)

The Magic Numbers play the Bowery Ballroom and Loew's Jersey Theatre.

RACHEL DOMM

ON SECOND AVENUE
The Folksbiene Yiddish Theatre, currently in its ninety-first year, remounts this lovably hokey revue, which traces the Yiddish theatrical tradition from its Eastern European roots, in the late nineteenth century, through its wildly abundant heyday, in downtown Manhattan in the early nineteen-hundreds. Mike Burstyn, whose parents were notable performers in the genre, leads the cast in a lively mélange of songs, jokes, and vaudevillian sketches. The show, by Zalmen Mlotek and Moishe Rosenfeld, doesn't attempt a thorough history but rather pays tribute to the form by capturing its rambunctious spirit. Performed in English and Yiddish, with supertitles. (J.C.C., 334 Amsterdam Ave. 212-239-6200.)

RFK
On Broadway, boomers relive the light side of sixties nostalgia at "Jersey Boys," but downtown at the Culture Project Jack Holmes's "RFK" brings the era's darker side to life, depicting a time when the torch was passed to a new generation of leaders, only for the torchbearers to be gunned down one by one: J.F.K., M.L.K., and, finally, R.F.K. Toothy, pompadoured, and boyish, Holmes, who wrote the play and also stars, looks and talks the part. A well-wrought labor of love and conscience, the play shows Kennedy's journey from brashness to courage, as his disgust at the Vietnam War persuaded him, belatedly, to run against Johnson for President. Holmes's moving portrayal of the kid brother turned attorney general, New York senator, and 1968 Democratic nominee for President makes Bobby not a sequel but a feature in his own right. (45 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.)

THE RUBY SUNRISE
The artistic director of the Public, Oskar Eustis, directs this play by Rinne Groff, about an inventor named Ruby, who is trying to develop an electrical television, and her daughter, a television producer who tries to tell her mother's story twenty years later. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

SEASCAPE
Edward Albee's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, directed by Mark Lamos, about two couples who meet on a beach and contemplate life, death, and consciousness. With George Grizzard, Elizabeth Marvel, Frances Sternhagen, and Frederick Weller. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

SEE WHAT I WANNA SEE
Michael John LaChiusa's new musical, a series of four scenes adapted from stories by Ryunosuke Akutagawa, has attracted a first-rate cast and is expertly mounted by the director Ted Sperling. But, as is typical of LaChiusa's work, it is situated somewhere between talent and pretension—or, in this case, between medieval Japan and contemporary Central Park. In one story, Kesa (the fine-voiced Idina Menzel), a Japanese woman in a silk kimono, sings of seeing her lover, Morito (the superb Marc Kudisch), for the last time, in words that don't quite have that medieval ring. In another, a priest (Henry Stram) who has lost his faith has a vision. When he asks his aunt if she believes that he saw a miracle, she replies, "If you say so, baby. Why not?" Truth, you see, is relative. (11/14/04) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

SISTER AND MISS LEXIE
David Kaplan and Brenda Currin bring together the characters of two Eudora Welty works, "Why I Live at the P.O." and "Losing Battles," in a play set to the music of Beethoven. Currin also stars and Kaplan directs. (Flea, 41 White St. 212-352-3101.)

A SOLDIER'S PLAY
In Charles Fuller's 1981 Pulitzer Prize-winning melodrama, set on an Army base in Louisiana in 1944 and directed by Jo Bonney, Private C. J. Memphis (Mike Colter) is a superstitious, happy-go-lucky black recruit from rural Mississippi whom the sadistic black Sergeant Vernon Waters (James McDaniel) frames for murder in order to get him out of his company. The play unfolds in flashback, told by the eloquent narrator, Captain Richard Davenport (Taye Diggs), who unravels the mystery as he interviews the members of Waters's platoon. But the notional characters are given only a wash of personality and psychology, and the casting is uneven. The actors are proficient, but there's no chemistry between the antagonists, and the stage-managed situation fails to sizzle. (10/31/05) (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422. Through Nov. 27.)

SOUVENIR
In Stephen Temperley's troubling new play (at the Lyceum), a wealthy middle-aged society woman, Florence Foster Jenkins (Judy Kaye), aspires to be an opera singer. The problem is that she can't carry a tune. Her accompanist, Cosme McMoon (Donald Corren), a gay former songwriter, quickly realizes, though, that Florence is possessed of a kind of genius, or, more precisely, of a force that he can't resist. Kaye's portrayal of the life and career of the famously bad singer who became a camp legend in New York before the Second World War is so real and so heartbreaking that one hardly notices the cheap shots that the director, Vivian Matalon, levels at his heroine. Temperley, instead of explaining how Jenkins became the rage, albeit a brief one, concentrates on her obliviousness of her own camp appeal, and Matalon, more often than not, gives us a caricature. But Kaye, a wise performer, shows us the gorgeous folly that goes into making a work of art, and offers us a portrait of triumph, disillusion, and belief. (11/21/05) (149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

SWEENEY TODD
Under the bold direction and design of John Doyle, this imported British revival at the Eugene O'Neill, which shrinks the cast of thirty to ten, with actors doubling as musicians, is almost unbearably exciting. With eight chairs, a coffin, and a ladder, Doyle conjures up a universe of woe and wonder; the actors are not just characters and musicians—they are also the scenery. Sweeney (Michael Cerveris), who was transported to Australia for fifteen years on a trumped-up charge by a judge who lusted after his wife, returns to London in disguise to find his wife apparently dead and his beloved daughter the ward of the very judge who sent him away. Cerveris is a terrifying Sweeney, a model of sulfurous restraint. Patti LuPone, as his pragmatic and pathological helpmate, Mrs. Lovett, is a gargoyle of toughness, and positively Weimar. As life and theatre have taught us, there is no escape from the power of the perverse. (11/14/05) (230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.)

THIRD
The title of Wendy Wasserstein's genial but aimless new play (at the Mitzi E. Newhouse, directed by Daniel Sullivan) refers to the nickname of a Groton-educated college wrestling star (Jason Ritter) who finds himself in the literature class of an iconoclastic professor named Laurie Jameson (the admirable Dianne Wiest). Third writes a compelling paper on "King Lear," but Jameson's idée fixe of him as "a walking red state" prevents her from acknowledging his originality. Instead, she accuses him of plagiarism. Jameson provides no proof for her claim, and Wasserstein provides no real drama other than Third's eloquent soliloquy in his own defense. But the play is given a hefty push by the eighty-year-old veteran Charles Durning, who, as Jameson's forgetful father, transcends the play with his grace and his grief. (11/7/05) (Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

WAITING FOR GODOT
Alan Hruksa directs the Samuel Beckett classic, in a production developed at the Actors' Studio. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Theatre at St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE WOMAN IN WHITE
Andrew Lloyd Webber's new musical, adapted from Wilkie Collins's Victorian thriller. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 212-307-4100.)

Also Playing

ALTAR BOYZ: Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200. **AVENUE Q:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **CHICAGO:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG:** Hilton, 213 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100. **DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **DOUBT:** Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200. **FIDDLER ON THE ROOF:** Minskoff, 200 W. 45th St. 212-307-4100. **FOOLS IN LOVE:** Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, 55 Mercer St. 212-239-6200. **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT:** 47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200. **HAIRSPRAY:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100. **IN THE CONTINUUM:** Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 212-868-4444. **LATINOLOGUES:**

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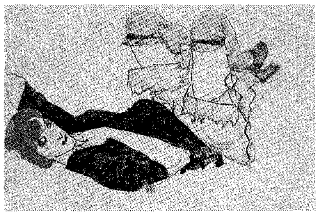
CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
FLESH FOR FANTASY

It's about sex. Hold the angst. The Egon Schiele who emerges in the Neue Galerie's bounteous show of more than a hundred and fifty works, mostly drawings, is a less troubled character than legend and piecemeal exposure to his art would suggest.



EGON SCHIELE, "WALLY IN RED BLOUSE WITH RAISED KNEES" (1913)

The precocious Austrian died of the flu in 1918, at the age of twenty-eight, after years of scandalous successes and the odd scandal, period. (An unproved charge involving a thirteen-year-old girl, in 1912, cost him twenty-four days in jail.) His signature mode might be termed libertine realism: picturing bodies in ways that exaggerate—and intensify—peremptory sexual fascination. The keenly limned grotesquerie of the bodies is beauty in the regard of an onlooker who has advanced well beyond the stage, in erotic enjoyment, of merely being attracted to them. Schiele kept his artistic wits about him in these realms of pornography—and first-rate wits they were, running a scale from the primitivist to the chic. Any pain conveyed is of some exquisite type. (Compare the sincerely unhappy self-portraits that he made in prison.) Schiele is more than a prophetic figure of pop decadence—David Bowie *avant le* eight-track—but not by a wide margin.

—*Peter Schjeldahl*

Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **THE LIGHT IN THE PIAZZA:** Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200. **MAMMA MIA!:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 212-239-6200. **MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **MOVIN' OUT:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 212-307-4100. **A NAKED GIRL ON THE APPIAN WAY:** American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300. **ONE-MAN STAR WARS TRILOGY:** Lamb's Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **ORSON'S SHADOW:** Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 212-239-6200. **SWEET CHARITY:** Al Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **THOM PAIN (BASED ON NOTHING):** DR2, 103 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200. **THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE:** Circle in the Square, 50th St. between Broadway and Eighth Ave. 212-239-6200. **WICKED:** Gershwin, 222 W. 51st St. 212-307-4100.

NIGHT LIFE
ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BAM CAFÉ

30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4139)—Nov. 25-26: The Zimbabwean expat **Akim Funk Buddha** dances, sings, and rhymes his way across the cultural landscape, in a show called the "Hip Hop Holiday." The first night features Zimbabwe Legit, the duo he's in with his brother **Dumi Right.** The pair immigrated to the United States in the early nineties and made an album, "Brother from the Mother," that was remixed by DJ Shadow and was only fully released this year. A fluid group of performers joins Akim on Saturday night, including the movement collective **EboNYasia,** the keyboardist **Wynne Bennett,** and **Dana Leong,** who coaxes bold urban sounds from the cello and trombone.

BARBÈS

376 9th St., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-965-9177)—Nov. 26: **Howard Fishman,** a Connecticut native who spent his musically formative years in New Orleans, is a gravelly-voiced singer and guitarist; his interests range from small-group jazz to indie rock.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL

237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Nov. 23: The smooth sounds of the **Café Soul All Stars,** featuring the vocalists Peabo Bryson, Vesta, Glenn Jones, and Jazmyn. Nov. 24: A Beatles tribute with **Strawberry Fields.** Nov. 25: An evening with the flamenco guitarist **Ottmar Liebert** and his band, Luna Negra. Later on Nov. 25: **Zilla,** a trio from Boulder, Colorado, that's a side project of the drummer Michael Travis, of the String Cheese Incident, is joined by the S.C.I. multi-instrumentalist Michael Kang. Nov. 26: **Roberta Flack** has one of the most beautiful voices of her generation, but her predilection for schmalz has sometimes painted her into a corner. Still, "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face" and "Killing Me Softly with His Song" are part of musical history. Nov. 27-29: The legendary blues guitarist **B. B. King.**

BEACON THEATRE

Broadway at 74th St. (212-307-7171)—Nov. 22-23: **Journey's** days of ruling FM radio are over, but the unapologetically mainstream band continues its flight. Steve Perry, the vocalist who put his stamp on all of the band's biggest hits, is long gone, replaced by the Brooklyn native Steve Augeri. Nov. 26: **Hot Tuna.** The guitarist Jorma Kaukonen and the bassist Jack Casady have been dipping into American folk, blues, and rock and roll for forty years. They show no sign of slowing down: this evening includes an acoustic set, during which they'll be joined by the mandolinist Barry Mitterhoff, and an electric set, during which they'll return to the amplified days of their youth in San Francisco.

BOWERY BALLROOM

6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—Nov. 23: Their name may sound like a joke, but **Lez Zeppelin** takes its tribute-band duties seriously. These ladies channel the sonic bombast of Led Zeppelin and gleefully invert the band's original sexual essence. Nov. 28: The **Magic Numbers** are a sunny act made up of two sets of brothers and sisters. Their eponymous début album of rootsy, classic pop found unlikely champions in the otherwise trend-obsessed British music press earlier this year. The group is sweetly oblivious of fashion, and its harmony-laden melodies and hippie aesthetic have garnered comparisons to the Mamas and the Papas.

CARNEGIE HALL

57th St. at Seventh Ave. (212-247-7800)—Nov. 23: **Tito Nieves** celebrates thirty years of salsa, with the help of **Gilberto Santarosa, India, Ismael Miranda, Tony Vega, Sergio George,** and other friends. Nov. 26: **Arlo Guthrie** stops by for his annual holiday show. This being the fortieth anniversary of his placing a letter under a pile of trash in Massachusetts—a story we don't have the space to go into here, but it's well known anyway—you can expect him to sing "Alice's Restaurant."

IRVING PLAZA

17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—Nov. 28: **Arch Enemy,** a heavy-metal band from Sweden, eschews dirges in favor of surprisingly tuneful riffs, although the shredded vocals of its lead singer, Angela Gossow, evoke the darkest pits of hell. Nov. 29: **From First to Last** is a histrionic band of young men who pair hardcore punk with self-pitying vocals that are far from easy on the ears. They strive to balance their petulance with dashes of black humor (their latest album is titled "Dear Diary, My Teen Angst Has a Body Count"), but the finished product remains a bitter pill.

JOE'S PUB

425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—Nov. 22-23: **Rhett Miller,** the front man of the alt-country outfit Old 97's, gives a preview of his forthcoming solo album, "The Believer." Nov. 25-26: The hard-rocking folkie icon **Melissa Ferrick** sets up shop. Her guest, **Natalia Zukerman,** comes from a family of noted classical musicians (her mother, Eugenia, is a flutist; her father, Pinchas, is a violinist; and her sister, Arianna, is an opera singer), but she has chosen to forsake grand performance halls for a dusty resophonic slide guitar in small clubs. She has nimble fingers capable of picking upward of thirty notes per measure, and when she sings she can switch from scat to swoon in the course of a glissando. Nov. 27: The pop polymath **Marshall Crenshaw.**

LOEW'S JERSEY THEATRE

54 Journal Square, Jersey City, N.J. (201-798-6055)—Nov. 25-26: **Bright Eyes.** Saddled with comparisons to every prominent songwriter from Bob Dylan to Kurt Cobain, the profoundly prolific Conor Oberst, the young leader of this indie-rock outfit, has to contend with being labelled the next generational spokesperson. His opening acts, **Feist** (a Canadian singer and a veteran of Broken Social Scene) and the **Magic Numbers** (see the Bowery Ballroom), operate under a little less pressure. (For information about tickets, visit www.maxwellsnj.com.)

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

Seventh Ave. at 33rd St. (212-307-7171)—Nov. 24: **"Megaton 2005,"** otherwise billed as the "Biggest Reggaeton Concert in the World." It may sound like hype, but the new dance genre—a hot stew of Jamaican dancehall and reggae rhythms, Latin-American *plena* and *bomba* beats, and hip-hop lyricism—is growing like wildfire. This show features **Daddy Yankee, Tego Calderon, Ivy Queen, Don Omar,** and **Wisin y Yandel,** among many others. Nov. 28-29: **Bon Jovi** churns out arena-ready anthems and power ballads.

MERCURY LOUNGE

217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700)—Nov. 26: **We Are Wolves,** a hyperkinetic group from Montreal, trades in jerky, electrified punk. Nov. 28: The **Cribs,** three brothers from England who are young enough to have come of age listening to the Strokes (a band they clearly admire), enjoy poking fun at the hipster scene that they so desperately want to join.

MO PITKIN'S HOUSE OF SATISFACTION

34 Avenue A, between 2nd and 3rd Sts. (212-777-5660)—Nov. 28: **Roberto Rodriguez,** a percussion-

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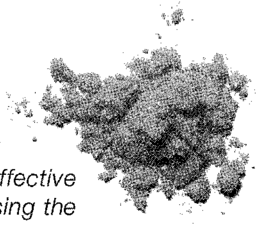

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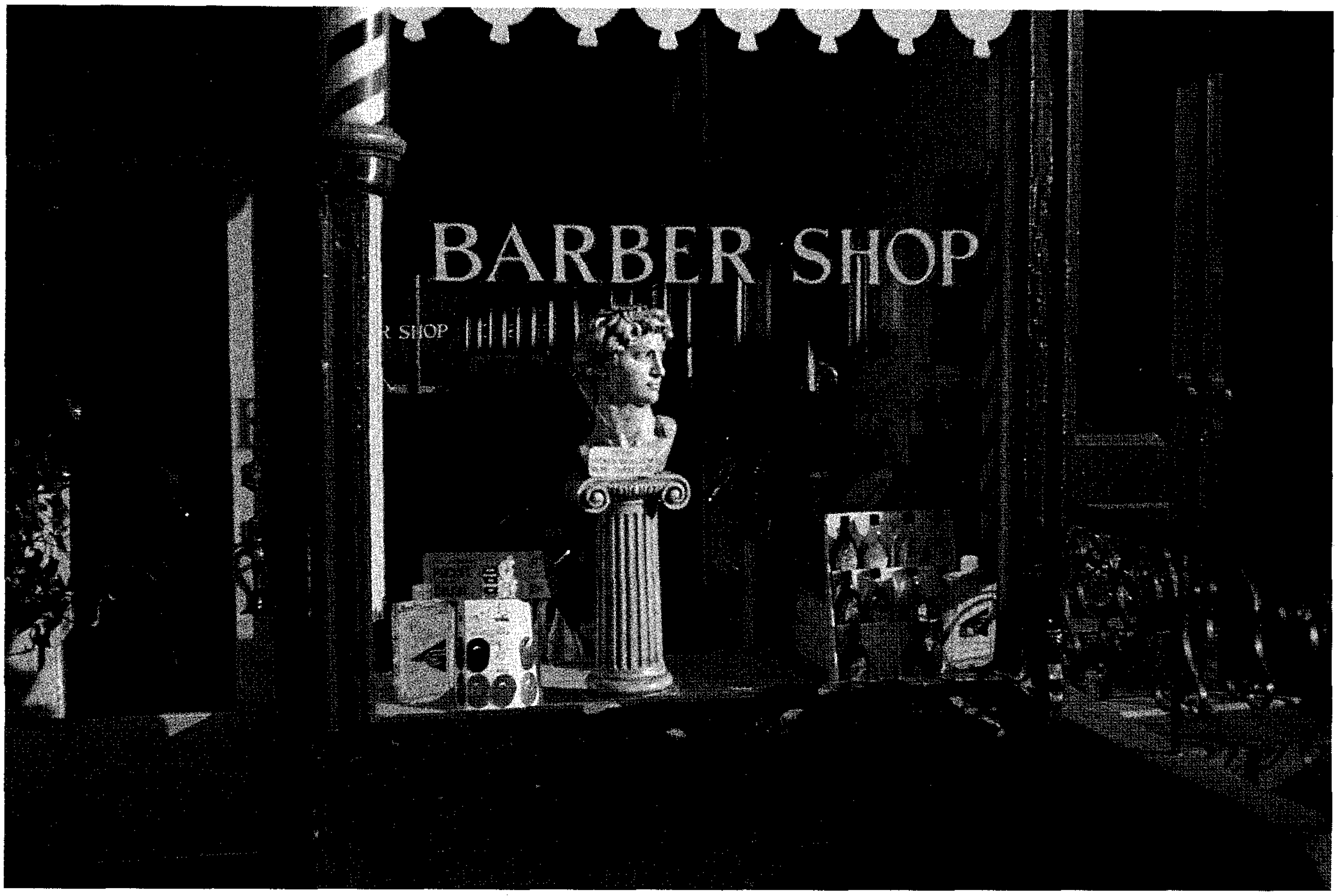


An untitled photograph by Stephen Shore, taken in 1972, from his show "American Surfaces," currently on view at P.S. 1.

ist for Joe Jackson and the only Cuban in Marc Ribot's band Los Cubanos Postizos, leads his own ensemble, delving into Cuban jazz and Jewish music without ever losing the dance beat.

NOKIA THEATRE TIMES SQUARE
Broadway at 44th St. (212-307-7171)—Nov. 23: **LCD Soundsystem** plays self-conscious, allusion-filled electronic pop. Nov. 25: The funky New Orleans outfit the **Meters,** which is back with its original drummer, Zigaboo Modeliste. Nov. 26: The spine-tingling bassist **Victor Wooten,** a veteran of the ensembles of Béla Fleck, Prince, and Dave Matthews, stops by with songs from his latest solo record, "Soul Circus," which includes contributions from Speech, of Arrested Development, and Bootsy Collins, among others.

ROSELAND
239 W. 52nd St. (212-307-7171)—Nov. 25-26: **Moe.** One of the avatars of the jam-band scene, this long-running group from upstate New York has made quite a name for itself by relying on a heavy touring schedule and an unexpectedly humorous sense of musical adventure.

SATALLA
37 W. 26th St. (212-576-1155)—Nov. 27: A night of harmonicas, guitars, tubas, trumpets, washboards, steel guitars, harmonicas, bass saxophones, violins, and more harmonicas as the local outfits **Hazmat Modine,** the **Wiyos,** and **Sxip!Matta** explore the history of the mouth organ.

S.O.B.'S
204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (212-243-4940)—Nov. 24: The subcontinental dance party **Basement Bhangra** spices up Thanksgiving. Nov. 27: **Toots & The Maytals.** If Bob Marley and the Wailers were the heart of reggae, then Frederick (Toots) Hibbert and his Maytals must surely be its soul: it was the group's 1968 hit, "Do the Reggay," that gave ska, dub, rock steady, and every other substratum of Jamaican music one all-encompassing name. Bring your dancing shoes for "Funky Kingston" and "Pressure Drop."

SUPPER CLUB
240 W. 47th St. (212-921-1940)—Nov. 28: The venerable British rock legend **Ray Davies** gives a one-off performance to mark the release of his solo EP "Thanksgiving Day." The bigger news, perhaps, is that after years of delay his first full album, "Other People's Lives," now has a release date: next February.

WEBSTER HALL
125 E. 11th St. (212-353-1600)—Nov. 29: The **Dandy Warhols,** who were portrayed as the victors over their shambolic rivals, the Brian Jonestown Massacre, in last year's award-winning documentary "Dig!," are still trying to move beyond cult status. The band's new album, "Odditorium or Warlords of Mars," delivers more of the group's signature psychedelic pop. The **Out Crowd,** led by the former Brian Jonestown Massacre co-founder Matt Hollywood, opens, proving that there are no hard feelings.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—The cabaret mainstay **Andrea Marcovicci** doesn't have the strongest voice in the business, but she consistently delivers witty repartee and engaging historical patter, and her material is always first rate. Through the end of the year, she's performing love songs from the Second World War era; in January, she returns with a three-week program devoted to Fred Astaire.

BARBÈS
376 9th St., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-965-9177)—Finding something to say that Metheny, Scofield, and Frisell haven't already expressed is the unenviable task faced by post-boomer jazz guitarists. **Ben Monder** (here Nov. 24), a noted new-jazz player since the eighties, faces the challenge head on.

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—Nov. 23-26: The legendary alto saxophonist **Lee Konitz** has a deliciously idiosyncratic dry tone and a pared-down approach that works well with guitarists; his quartet includes the aggressive improviser **Peter Bernstein.**

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Nov. 22-27: On the heels of the mid-sixties bossa-nova explosion, the pianist **Sergio Mendes** and his Brasil ensembles scored a number of hits with covers of such songs as "Scarborough Fair" and "The Look of Love."

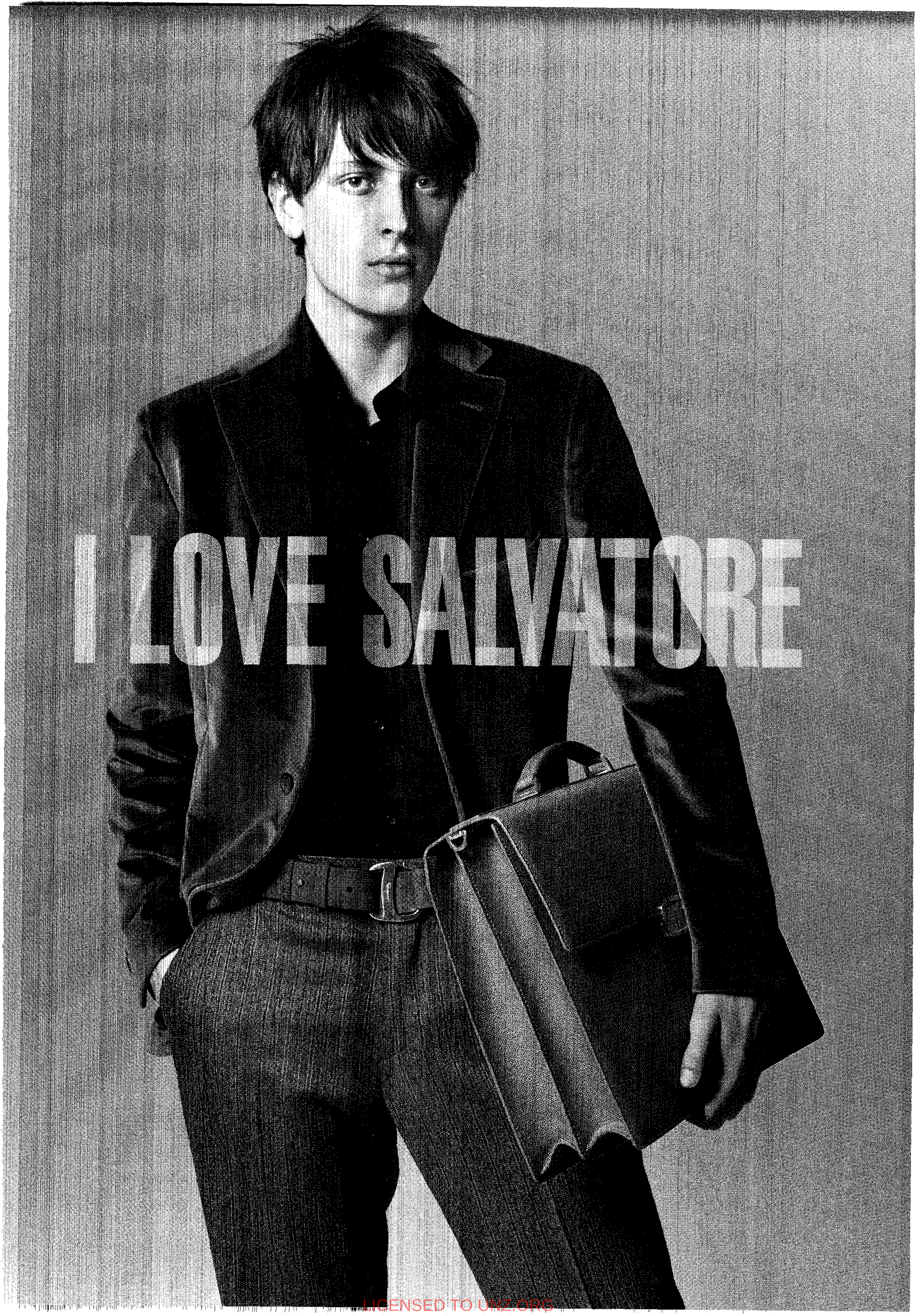
CARLYLE HOTEL
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound murals, and, through Dec. 31, the gruff-voiced singer **Steve Tyrell.**

DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA
Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—Nov. 22-27: **Eric Alexander,** a thirty-something tenor saxophonist from Galesburg, Illinois, who has spent much of his time playing in Chicago, adds **Von Freeman,** the Windy City's premier tenor player, to his quintet. Alexander has heft and velocity, but the eighty-three-year-old Freeman has invention and poetry on his side.

FEINSTEIN'S AT THE REGENCY
540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (212-339-4095)—Through Nov. 26: **Michele Lee.** "Knots Landing," the hit prime-time soap she co-starred in for fourteen seasons, may be the jewel in Lee's pop-culture crown, but in the sixties and seventies she lit up Broadway as a singer and dancer in "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying" and "Seesaw."

JAZZ GALLERY
290 Hudson St., near Spring St. (212-242-1063)—Nov. 25-26: The scrappy big band of the pianist and composer **Jason Lindner** is in the midst of celebrating its tenth anniversary; soloists include the Israeli jazz musicians **Anat Cohen** on saxophone and her brother **Avishai** on trumpet.

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Nov. 22-23 and Nov. 25-27: The **Maria Schneider Jazz Orchestra.** Schneider, an extravagantly talented composer, ar-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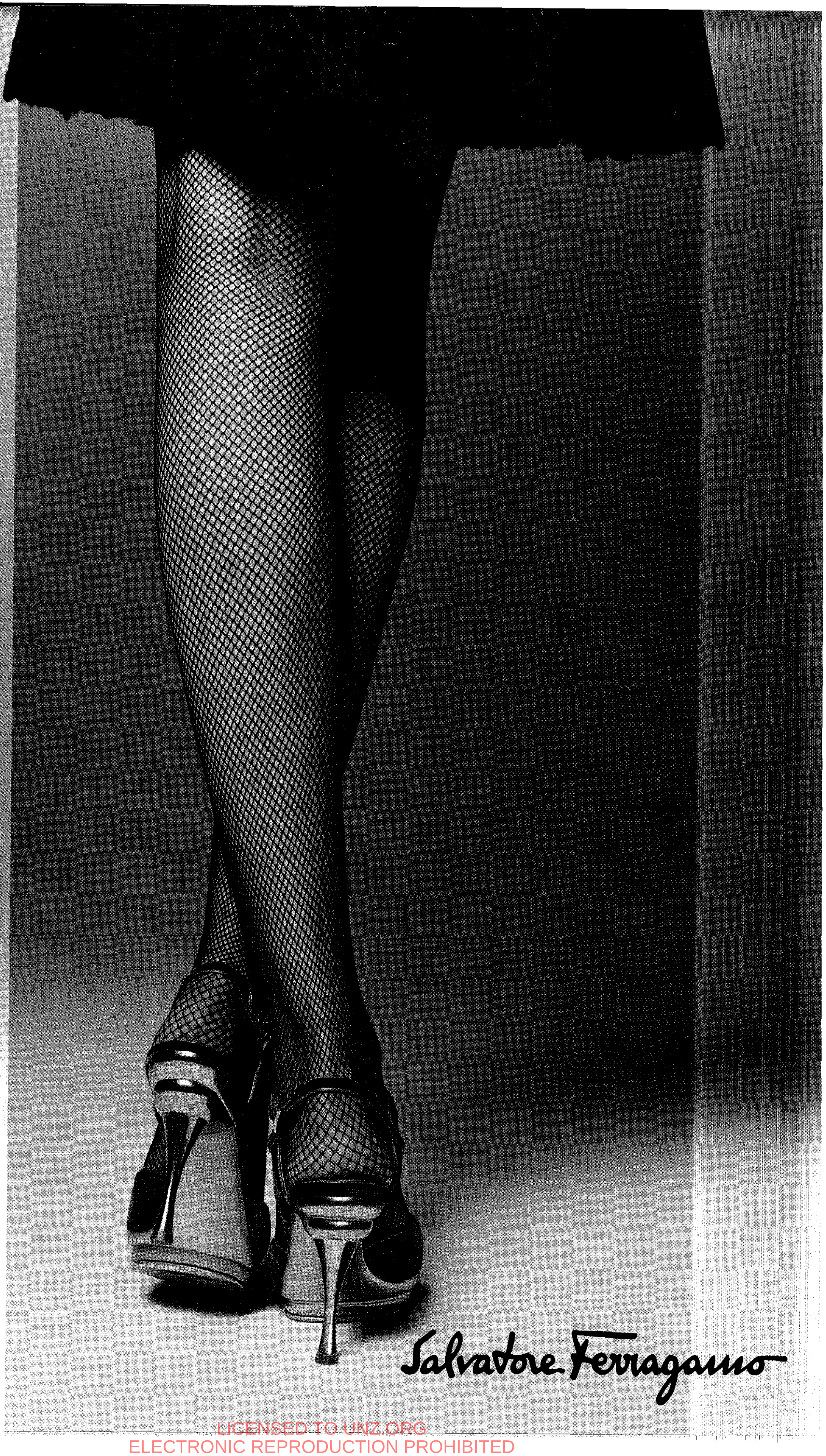

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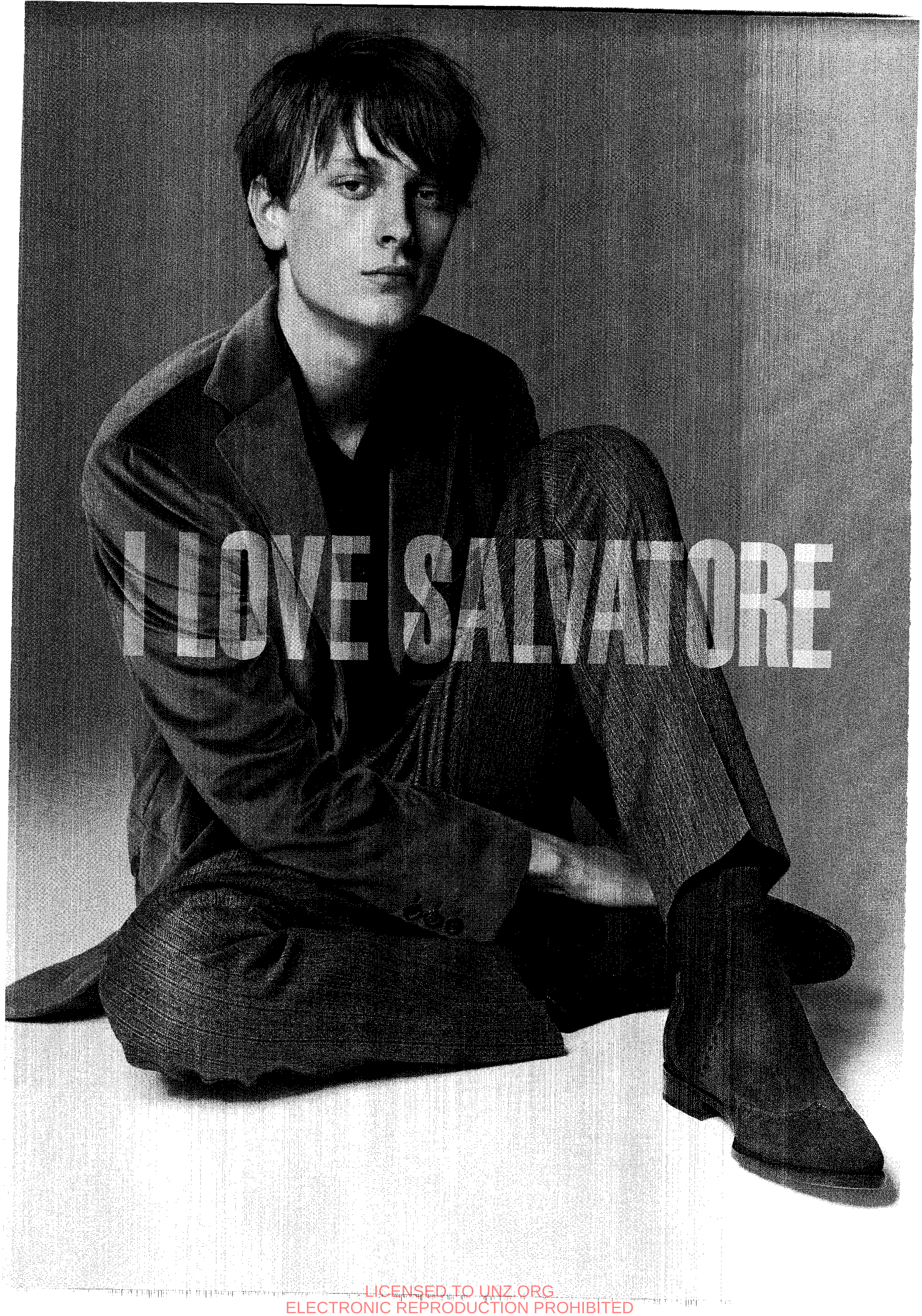
I LOVE SALVATORE

ranger, and bandleader, creates atmospheric Gil Evans-inspired soundscapes that make room for impressive soloists.

SWEET RHYTHM
88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (212-255-3626)—Nov. 25-26: **Johnny O'Neal** has played with Art Blakey, Milt Jackson, and other high-profile jazzmen, but the estimable pianist is still little known in these parts; the wily trombonist (and Wynton Marsalis regular) **Wycliffe Gordon** joins him here on the first night.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Nov. 22-27: **Brad Mehldau**, a formidable pianist who is as comfortable with the work of Schubert and Radiohead as he is with more conventional jazz fare, recently replaced his long-term drummer, Jorge Rosy, with **Jeff Ballard. Larry Grenadier** remains the trio's bassist. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—The devotional paintings in **"Fra Angelico"** are lit up with heavenly blues, blood reds, and pure golds. Rewarding long contemplation, they can feel like love letters, passed down through the centuries from the fifteenth-century Tuscan artist. Through Jan. 29. ♦ **"Vincent van Gogh: The Drawings."** Through Dec. 31. ♦ **"Santiago Calatrava: Sculpture Into Architecture."** Through March 5. ♦ For the exhibition **"Pearls of the Parrot of India: The Emperor Akbar's Illustrated 'Khamsa,' 1597-98,"** a tranquil, crimson-hued gallery holds manuscripts, unbound for conservation, of the Sufi poet Amir Khusrau Dihlavi's five-tale "Khamsa," illustrated with vibrant landscapes, theatrical figures, and intricately drawn *shamsa* rosettes. Through March 12. ♦ **"Prague: The Crown of Bohemia, 1347-1437."** Through Jan. 3. ♦ The pre-Photoshop images in **"The Perfect Medium: Photography and the Occult"** were purported to depict ghosts, spirit writing, ectoplasm, and the like. Through Dec. 31. ♦ **"David Milne Watercolors: 'Painting Toward the Light.'"** A subset of a larger show organized by the Art Gallery of Ontario, these forty-five watercolor depictions of New York State scenes provide a rare chance to see the work of the Canadian artist (1882-1953) outside his home country. Through Jan. 29. ♦ The centerpiece of **"The Art of Medicine in Ancient Egypt"** is a fifteen-foot papyrus (ca. 1650-1550 B.C.), on loan from the New York Academy of Medicine, explaining the diagnosis and treatment of wounds to the head, neck, and shoulders by means both scientific and magical. Ointment jars, statues of healing gods, implements, and mummies are also on view. Through Jan. 16. ♦ **"Rara Avis: Selections from the Iris Barrel Apfel Collection."** Through Jan. 22. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—**"Beyond the Visible: The Art of Odilon Redon,"** a retrospective of paintings and drawings by the French symbolist (1840-1916). Through Jan. 23. ♦ The retrospective exhibition **"Elizabeth Murray"** includes many of the shaped and splintered canvases covered with energizing color combinations for which the artist is best known. In the second-floor galleries, a selection of Murray's prints adapt similar techniques to paper. Through Jan. 9. ♦ **"Stillness: Michael Snow/Sam Taylor Wood,"** a small show of photographs and video works. Through Nov. 28. ♦ The fever pitch of post-9/11 anxiety is simultaneously stoked and suppressed in **"SAFE: Design Takes on Risk,"** an exhibition of objects designed to ward off, stanch, or manage disaster. Some are tongue in cheek, like the desk-cum-panic room built by a British collective called Design for Fragile Personalities in Anxious Times or Ralph Borland's "Suit for Subversion," a padded outfit for street protesters reminiscent of sports-team mascot costumes. Protective face masks and hoods, chemical-resistant booties, land-mine detectors, and a bullet-resistant blouse counter the glib tone. Through Jan. 2. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—The sprawling exhibition **"Russia!"** includes most everything you might think could fit under that rubric: gilt religious icons dating from the Middle Ages, Renaissance-era Western European paintings from imperial collections, romanticized portraits of peasant life, socialist-realist propaganda, early modernist masterworks from the collections of industrialists, videos made just this year. Through Jan. 11. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (800-944-8639)—Ed Ruscha's installation of paintings **"Course of Empire"**—which shares a name and theme with Thomas Cole's 1836 cycle of paintings, in the New-York Historical Society's permanent collection—was a hit at the Venice Biennale, and will be on view at the Whitney through Jan. 29. ♦ **"The Art of Richard Tuttle."** Through Feb. 5. ♦ **"Raymond Pettibon."** Representatives from most of the significant subcultures portrayed in Pettibon's work are included in these thirty-seven drawings: the surfers gliding down ukiyo-e-style waves, the tragic-iconic baseball players, lonesome antiheroes and antiheroines inspired by pin-ups and comic books. An animated film created from drawings recalls William Kentridge's drawn animations but possesses little of their power. The glib voices accompanying the moving images are a sharp contrast to the ghostly, disembodied voice of the pictures, whose genuineness and authority are at the crux of Pettibon's art. Through Feb. 19. ♦ The retrospective **"Oscar Bluemner: A Passion for Color"** reveals a painter (1867-1938) who melded Old World influences with an architect's training and eye—updated later by the lessons of the Fauves, Die Brücke, and artists like Franz Marc—to produce images of buildings and landscapes broken into bright structural shards, like segments of stained glass. Through Feb. 12. ♦ **"Building and Breaking the Grid, 1962-2002."** Through Jan. 8. ♦ **"Still Life: A Vital Theme."** Through Jan. 15. ♦ **"The New City: Sub/Urbia in Recent Photography."** Through Jan. 15. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Central Park W. at 79th St. (212-769-5100)—**"Darwin"** traces the discoveries and influence of the great naturalist (1809-82) with, among other things, a recreation of his study, samples of fossils he collected, and live specimens of the tortoises, frogs, and iguanas that he encountered in his travels to the Galápagos Islands. Through May 29. ♦ **"Dinosaurs: Ancient Fossils, New Discoveries,"** a review of recent developments in the study of dinosaurs, provides insight into how the animals moved through their world. Through Jan. 8. ♦ **"The Butterfly Conservatory: Tropical Butterflies Alive in Winter"** is back for an eighth year. Through May 29. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART
200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—**"Tree of Paradise: Jewish Mosaics from the Roman Empire."** Through June 4. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM
45 W. 53rd St. (212-265-1040)—An international quintet of self-taught artists have work on view in **"Obsessive Drawing."** Through March 19. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 10:30 to 5:30, and Fridays, 10:30 to 7:30.)

FRICK COLLECTION
1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700)—Some one hundred paintings by the Netherlandish artist Hans Memling (ca. 1435-94) survive; of the thirty portraits, twenty are at the Frick for the exhibition **"Memling's Portraits."** Through Dec. 31. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 11 to 5.)

GROLIER CLUB
47 E. 60th St. (212-838-6690)—**"No Other Appetite: Sylvia Plath, Ted Hughes, and the Blood Jet of Poetry"** presents the couple's manuscripts, letters, photographs, and more. Through Nov. 19. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. (212-857-0000)—**"El Salvador: Work of Thirty Photographers."** In an un-

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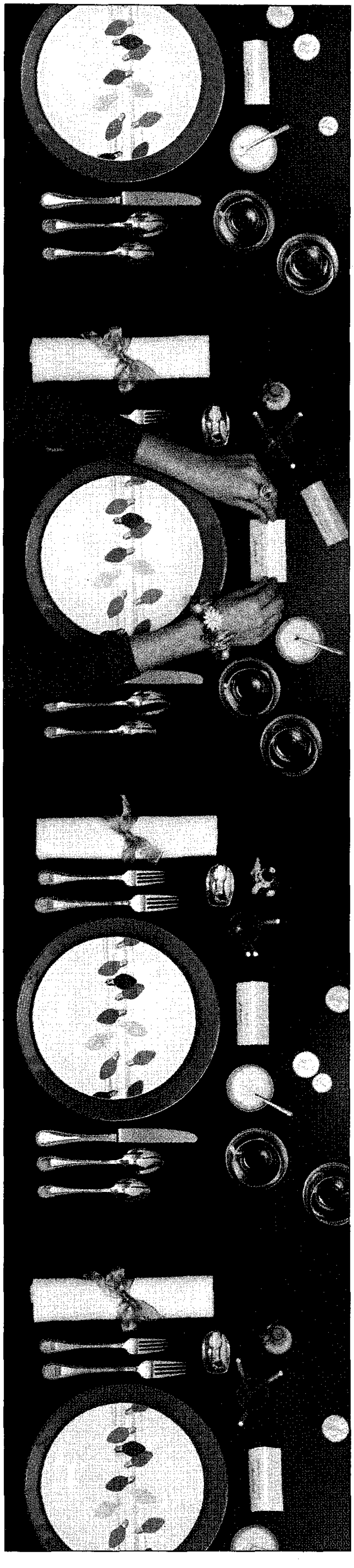


usual and timely move, the I.C.P. remounts a show it first presented in 1984 to coincide with the publication of a collection of photojournalism documenting the twelve-year civil war in El Salvador. Organized by Susan Meiselas and Harry Mattison and including work by James Nachtwey, Eugene Richards, Eli Reed, and others, the project has lost none of its harrowing, infuriating power. Seeing these images of resistance, protest, and casual brutality—of bodies tossed to the side of dirt roads—it's impossible not to think of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and all the photographs we don't see in newspapers today. Through Nov. 27. ♦ **"André Kertész."** Through Nov. 27. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 10 to 6, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

JAPAN SOCIETY
333 E. 47th St. (212-752-3015)—Hiroshi Sugimoto's **"History of History,"** a show that juxtaposes his photographs with fossils, scrolls, masks, and other ancient Asian art and artifacts from his own collection, is a minimalist tour de force that flirts with surrealist provocation. Through Feb. 19. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 6, and weekends, 11 to 5.)

MUSEO DEL BARRIO
Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (212-831-7272)—**"The (S) Files/The Selected Files,"** an emerging-artist showcase featuring forty Latinos and Latin-Americans. Through Jan. 29. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

NATIONAL ACADEMY MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-369-4880)—**"Marks of Distinction: Two Hundred Years of American Drawings and Watercolors from the Hood Museum of Art."** Through Dec. 31. (Open Wednesdays and Thursdays, noon to 5, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

NEUE GALERIE
1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-628-6200)—**"Egon Schiele,"** an exhibition of more than a hundred and fifty paintings and drawings by the Austrian artist, who died in 1918, at the age of twenty-eight. Through Feb. 20. (Open Fridays, 11 to 9, and Saturdays through Mondays, and Thursdays, 11 to 6.)

NEW MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART
Temporarily located in the Chelsea Art Museum, 556 W. 22nd St. (212-219-1222)—**Brian Jungen's** sculptures sound like Surrealist homework: use Nike sneakers, plastic chairs, and cafeteria trays to represent Pacific Northwest tribal masks, whale skeletons, and aboriginal prisoners in the Canadian penal system. But Jungen manages the transpositions with satirical grace. The full-size skeletons hanging from the ceiling look ready for the Museum of Natural History, except that their bones are made of molded white patio furniture, just as the bird-headed totems look weirdly authentic, in spite of Air Jordan logos stamped on their leather plumage. The plastic trays make a low-budget minimalist cube, the distribution of their different colors registering the durations of the prisoners' sentences. Through Dec. 31. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
170 Central Park W., at 77th St. (212-873-3400)—In 1703, forty-two per cent of all households in New York held slaves. The economic underpinnings of the international trade in slave labor made the Port of New York—the financial center of the New World—a natural hub for traffic in kidnapped Africans, while its bustling urban population also attracted freed persons and fugitives. In the nineteenth century, as abolitionist feeling grew, the city offered a forum to orators like William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass. **"Slavery in New York"** examines this history and much more, with an installation loaded with statistics and documents. Most effective are the audio renderings of letters, diary entries, and court proceedings detailing the daily lives of black and white New Yorkers caught up in the "peculiar institution." Through March 5. ♦ The Society's collection of Hudson River School painters serves as the core of **"Nature and the American Vision,"** but other nineteenth-century landscapes displayed here stretch far beyond the tristate area to Yosemite, Europe, South America, and the Arctic. Hudson River School stalwarts like George Innes, Asher Brown Durand, and Thomas Cole paint great stops on the American Grand Tour (e.g., Lake George, the Catskills, and the Adirondacks), as well as bucolic and majestic views of New York's great river. There are also examples of Staffordshire pottery transfer-printed with scenes of mountains and waterfalls and Wade & Croome's folding twelve-foot "Panorama of the Hudson River" (1847), a wonderfully graphic mapping of the river from the tip of Manhattan to Lansingburgh, just above Troy. Through Feb. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 6, and Friday evenings until 8.)

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. (212-869-8089)—How lovely it must have been to read or pray before the age of the printing press. Granted, the pleasures would have been available only to the rich and educated. But for those in possession of the Bibles, breviaries, books of hours, histories, and narratives shown in **"The Splendor of the Word: Medieval and Renaissance Illuminated Manuscripts,"** the handmade page offered unparalleled delights in the form of imaginative marginalia, exquisite devotional paintings, illustrated maps, flowing Gothic script, and scenes from Aesop's fables or Boccaccio's naughty "Decameron." Some one hundred selections from the N.Y.P.L.'s world-class collection are on display, ranging from the early tenth century well into the sixteenth. Through Feb. 12. ♦ In honor of the renovation of the library's Map Division (scheduled to reopen with new conservation facilities in December), some wonders from the archives are unfolded in **"Treasured Maps."** Through April 9. (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 7:30, Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 1 to 5.)

P.S. 1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER
22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—**"Stephen Shore: American Surfaces."** The bulk of these photographs (two hundred and forty-three images) taken on a road trip in the early nineteen-seventies are on display for the first time in decades. Shore combines Pop art's celebration of the commonplace and Walker Evans's deadpan descriptiveness with a stoner's wonder—a coffee cup on wood-grain Formica or the dusty sole of a woman's bare foot is transformed into a casual epiphany. Through Jan. 23. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, noon to 6.)

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART
150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000)—Serene sage, all-giving mother, or lion-headed protectress, the female Buddha takes many forms. **"Female Buddhas: Women of Enlightenment in Himalayan Art"** also includes depictions of Hindu deities, among the approximately fifty paintings, sculptures, and textiles dating from the thirteenth through the nineteenth centuries. Avatars of Tara, the "Mother of All Activities," join with images of Durga, Lakshmi, Uma, Kali, and the Tibetan figure known as the Universal White Parasol, who shelters the world beneath her ethereal umbrella. Beatific smiles abound, but so do horrific emanations with blue-black skin, raised swords, and necklaces of skulls. Through Jan. 15. (Open Tuesdays and Saturdays, 11 to 7, Wednesdays, 11 to 5, Thursdays and Fridays, 11 to 9, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

THE SCULPTURE CENTER
44-19 Purves St., Long Island City (718-361-1750)—Ayşe Erkmen's site-specific installation **"Busy Colors."** Through Nov. 27. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Galleries are usually open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6; please call the gallery for exact hours.

PHILIP GUSTON
The paintings and drawings assembled for "Philip Guston: Abstract + Figurative" are not the Master's best work, and an aroma of salesmanship clings to the show, as if the storehouse were being emptied. Even so, Guston's rage and humor shine

through the motley, and there are two really good paintings: one of a long-lashed couple lying far apart in bed, under an ominous but juicy red coverlet; the other depicting a fencelike row of skinny, hairy legs, each shod in an iconic black hobnailed shoe. The legs poke up from a bank of black earth like soldiers' weapons planted over graves. Through Dec. 17. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave. 212-688-5951.)

YVES KLEIN

Some thirty paintings and drawings from the Klein estate celebrate International Klein Blue, the ultramarine pigment patented in the late nineteen-fifties as a coloristic signature by the impresario of grandiloquent monochrome. It is a remarkable hue, especially as employed in Klein's "sponge" paintings, wherein natural sea sponges are soaked in I.K.B. and applied like lumps of impasto to a canvas of the same oceanic color. Also on view are Klein's experiments with Shocking-pink pigment and gold leaf, and a sampling of his "Anthropometries," images made with raw pigment or even fire, using nude models as mark-making instruments. Through Dec. 10. (L & M Arts, 45 E. 78th St. 212-861-0020.)

COLLIER SCHORR

For the last six years, Schorr has worked on a project inspired by Andrew Wyeth's notorious "Helga Pictures," photographing a young German boy named Jens and three other doppelgängers, both male and female, in the same intimate poses as Wyeth's model and compiling the images into a diarylike scrapbook. That densely layered book, just published as "Jens F.," is at the center of Schorr's exhibition of photos, collages, and related ephemera, all spun off from her rich exploration of the fluid nature of gender, identity, and desire. It's this savvy provocateur's most personal and accomplished work so far. Through Dec. 17. (Roth, 160A E. 70th St. 212-717-9067.)

CY TWOMBLY

Twombly's suite of eight monumental paintings celebrate Dionysus in his dual guises as Bacchus Psilax, the patron of wine, festivity, and pleasure, and Bacchus Mainomenos, the deity governing altered states, insanity, and fury. Twombly's portentous mix of infantile scribbling and classical mythology is unusually effective and direct in these huge, buff-colored canvases, which are scrawled with wild, drippy loops of arterial red. The unmistakable sense that a killing has spattered the walls is held in tension by the panels' sizzling devotional vitality; the small exhibition room feels like a gory chapel. Through Dec. 24. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 212-744-2313.)

Short List

ALBERTO GIACOMETTI: PaceWildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 212-421-3292. Through Dec. 17. **JOHN GRAHAM:** Stone, 113 E. 90th St. 212-987-4997. Through Dec. 22. **BARRY LE VA:** Mary Boone, 745 Fifth Ave. 212-752-2929. Through Dec. 17. **CHARLES MARVILLE:** Howard Greenberg, 41 E. 57th St. 212-334-0010. Through Dec. 3. **LAURA MCPHEE/HIROSHI WATANABE:** Benrubi, 41 E. 57th St. 212-888-6007. Through Nov. 26. **CLAES OLDENBURG:** Zwirner & Wirth, 32 E. 69th St. 212-517-8677. Through Dec. 23. **CHRIS WARE:** Baumgold, 74 E. 79th St. 212-861-7338. Through Dec. 3.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

BAS JAN ADER

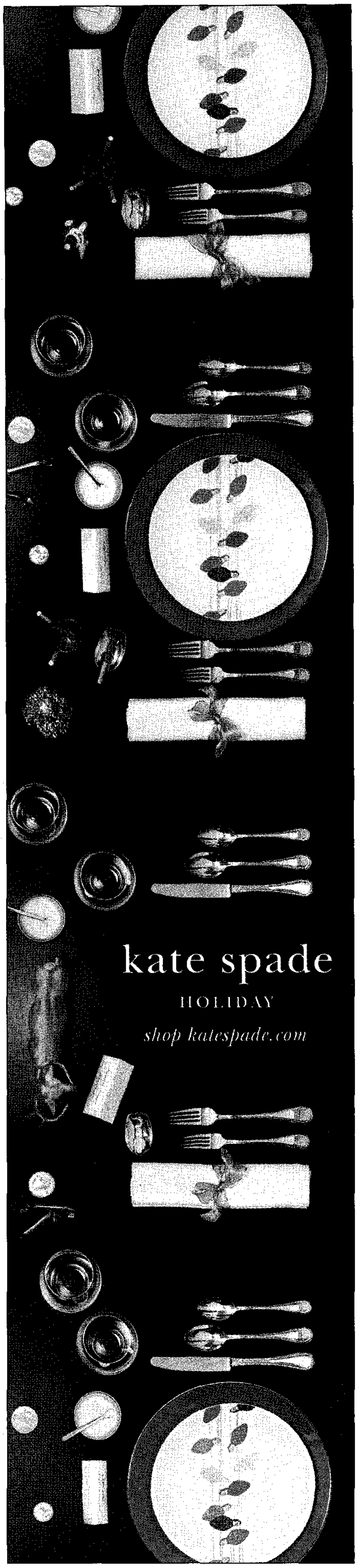
This tantalizingly unprolific Dutch conceptualist ushered himself into cult status in 1975, when he set sail from Cape Cod and disappeared into the Atlantic. A selection of works from the years immediately preceding this dramatic exit includes the famous black-and-white film "I'm Too Sad to Tell You," a wall-sized closeup of Ader weeping, all hippie hair and sensitive, mobile features. Another film functions as a sort of companion piece, showing a pair of hands arranging and rearranging a

DVD NOTES
BUGS AND LENNY

The sumptuous candy box that is the **"Looney Tunes Golden Collection: Volume 3"** (Warner Bros.) is a sweeter sampling of the treasures of Termite Terrace than the first two installments in the series. There are entire disks devoted to Bugs Bunny and to Porky Pig, valuable documentaries, and a collection of wartime cartoons, but the set's crucial offering is a disk of "Hollywood Caricatures and Parodies," which explores the close connections between Warner Brothers' great cartoons and its live-action fare. "A Hare Grows in Manhattan," directed by Friz Freleng in 1947, is a takeoff on short-subject visits to Hollywood celebrities. In it, Bugs Bunny grows up on the mean streets of the East Side of New York, tap-dancing his way down the sidewalk. A peculiarly dandyish apparition in his straw hat and white gloves, he is bullied by canine toughs, narrowly escapes their clutches, and makes his way into the idyllic American heartland—only to be shot at by Elmer Fudd for all eternity. The drama of Bugs' existence is that of the hunted eluding the hunter, and his insolent trashing of Elmer's middle-class comforts is a specific brand of vengeance. Bugs was modelled on movie stars (he had the zany patter of Groucho Marx and the blue-collar vanity of James Cagney), but if he could have done away with the rabbit suit, he might have grown up to be Lenny Bruce.

Bruce himself, born on Long Island in 1925, was also a product of the movies. His early dream was to be a director, and onstage he was a one-man cartoon, doing all the voices and poses of movie parodies that he infused with his own stringent and paradoxical morality. **"The Lenny Bruce Performance Film"** (Koch Vision) features a cartoon based on Bruce's routine "Thank You Mask Man," about a Lone Ranger-like hero corrupted by gratitude. Most of the disk, though, is an hour-long film, from San Francisco in 1965, of Bruce's second-to-last public appearance, in the wake of his 1964 obscenity conviction in New York. That ordeal brought an odd bounty: the trial transcript, which Bruce read aloud onstage and used as the basis for his act. Bruce was as dependent on censorship as Bugs Bunny was on rabbit hunting: the confrontation with authority provided him with his master plot. Indeed, Bruce sets up a profound, uproarious digression on Jews with the claim that "when people are liberal with something, they're ignorant." Bruce's legal travails—bankruptcy and a pending jail term (which only his death, in 1966, spared him)—may have ruined him practically, but they nourished his art, transforming him from a comic monologuist to an obsessed, outcast philosopher of law.

—*Richard Brody*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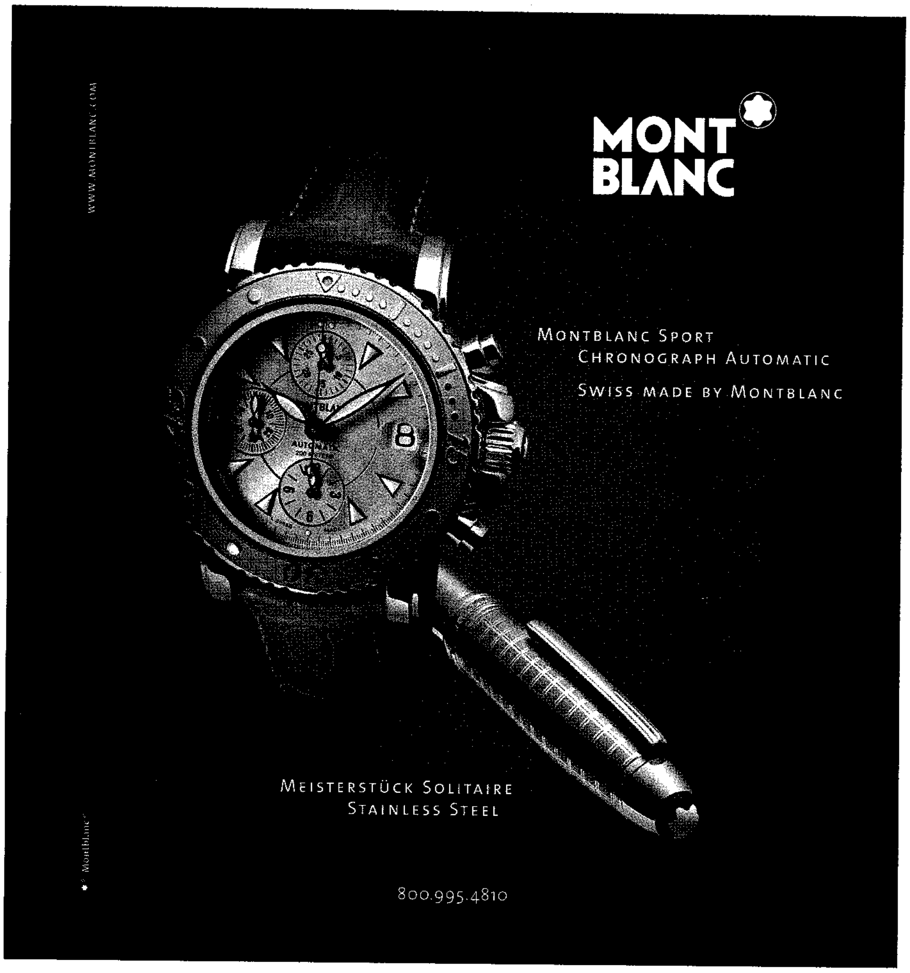

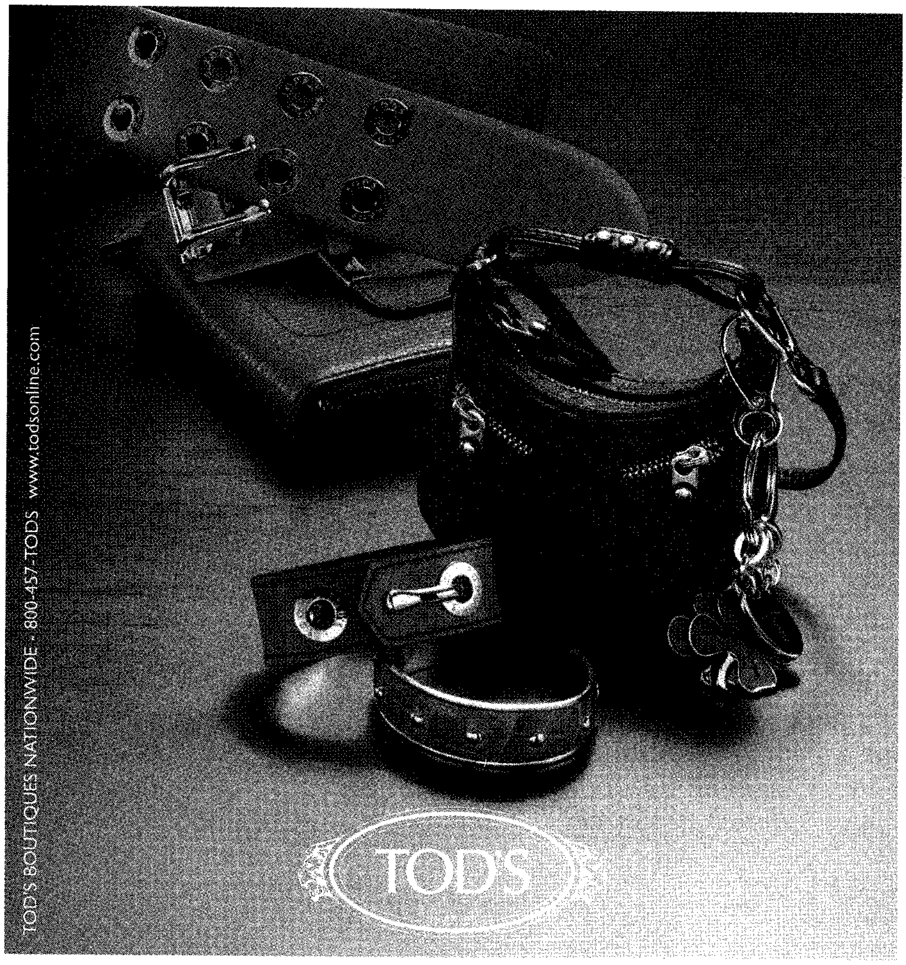
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vase of moribund red and yellow mums; this in turn rhymes with a neon sculpture and a suite of gouaches, both in red, yellow, and blue, that pun Oedipally on Ader's countryman Mondrian and are titled "Piet Niet." Through Dec. 22. (Rubenstein, 534 W. 24th St. 212-462-4905.)

MARK BRADFORD

There's a lot going on in Bradford's new work. A series of near-billboard-size abstract paintings collaged with scraps of paper, string, and barely legible advertisements is accompanied by an artful pile of supermarket-style posters hawking community self-help, and a video in which a black man in yellow shorts sashays down an L.A. street, riffing on Marilyn Monroe. The show is titled "Grace and Measure," a phrase borrowed from Baudelaire; the spirit conjured is that of a contemporary flâneur, cultivating his flowers of evil in the gardens of Hollywood. Through Dec. 3. (Sikkema Jenkins, 530 W. 22nd St. 212-929-2262.)

TRACEY EMIN

Emin's notorious 1999 Turner Prize entry included a bed with soiled sheets surrounded by liquor bottles and used condoms—detritus that played brinkmanship with earlier artists' claims of collapsing the gap between art and life. New Yorkers get the cleaned-up version of her confessional art: walls hung with rough, quasi-erotic embroideries; a neon sign that spells out the cuddly phrase "I Can Feel Your Smile"; a faded, shaky film starring a lone German shepherd—a doppelgänger, perhaps, of the artist herself. Messages scrawled among the faux-naïf doodlings recall Karen Kilimnik's girly diaristic aesthetic, but where Kilimnik's waif girl has matured into an interesting, if strange lady, Emin's infantile persona remains self-absorbed, cloying, and needy. The result is a body of work rife with growing pains. Through Dec. 17. (Lehmann Maupin, 540 W. 26th St. 212-255-2923.)

LIAM GILLICK

The complicated relationship between art and design starts with a painting bought to match the couch and ends with artists throwing in the towel and joining forces with designers, à la rococo or strains of modernism. Gillick toys with the art-design nexus by merging painted geometric shards along one wall with sculpture, sculpture with decorative screens and seating. Hanging aluminum sheets with scrunched-up text playfully spoof on advertising: "Compressed Signage," "Depressed Signage," "Repressed Signage." A model for a larger project, to be built in a plaza in Guadalajara, Mexico, merges sculpture and architecture with the bright-colored, über-functional look of playground equipment. Through Dec. 10. (Casey Kaplan, 525 W. 21st St. 212-645-7335.)

HANS HAACKE

Haacke's first gallery show since September 11th looks more like a P.T.A. meeting gone awry than a rousing piece of agitprop. A ripped flag hangs from the ceiling; pennies spill from a tipped-over box; a dot-matrix printer spews out mundane "News Flashes." Haacke's proposal for a 9/11 memorial completes the picture. We might worry when the elder statesman of postwar political art presents works with shrugging titles like "Life Goes On" and "Stuff Happens." The implicit message, however, is perhaps even more chilling: that, in this age at least, the artist's role is to provide commentary rather than be directly involved. Through Dec. 23. (Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. 212-255-1105.)

REBECCA HORN

For the brooding installation "Twilight Transit," mirrors, lights, and cast human skulls are mounted on metal armatures that move like rudimentary mobiles, casting orbs of light on the walls and reflecting glimpses of visitors. The effect is subtle to the point of confusion; visitors may wonder whether they're viewing the sculptures incorrectly, failing to activate the full range of effects. A program of films from the early seventies featuring people donning absurd, vaguely S & M prosthetics and communing with nature offers quirkier, more tangible satisfaction. Through Dec. 3. (Sean Kelly, 528 W. 29th St. 212-239-1181.)

MARY KELLY
A stern paean to activist feminism of the nineteen-seventies, Kelly's installation is called "Love Songs." Running in a frieze around the dark gallery is a series of plastic panels incised with cut-out script and lit from behind so that the phrases glow. Apparently describing an outré demonstration—references to fingers and nipples recur—these language objects are visually appealing, but more evocative is a projection in which two black-and-white photographs cross-fade. One was taken at a women's-lib march in N.Y.C. in 1970; the other is Kelly's restaging of the archival image with young women in 2005. As elegy and exhortation, it's worth a thousand words. Through Dec. 3. (Postmasters, 459 W. 19th St. 212-727-3323.)

BILL VIOLA
Viola has been gripped by the religious impulse. Lush video images of primordial elements—earth, air, fire, water—have metastasized into heavy-handed metaphors for birth, life, death, and salvation. Time is essential to his method; nearly everything in these wall projections happens in stark slow motion. Bodies squirm in the water; a sun rises and sets behind a tree; a man walks through fire; two figures perform ritual ablutions. There is beauty in the slowed-down gesture, the solemn whiff of Noh or Tai Chi, but it's also a too easy tactic for creating profundity. One feels stirred, at times, but slightly embarrassed, since the symbols and themes often veer into the bombastic. Through Dec. 22. (James Cohan, 533 W. 26th St. 212-714-9500.)

Short List

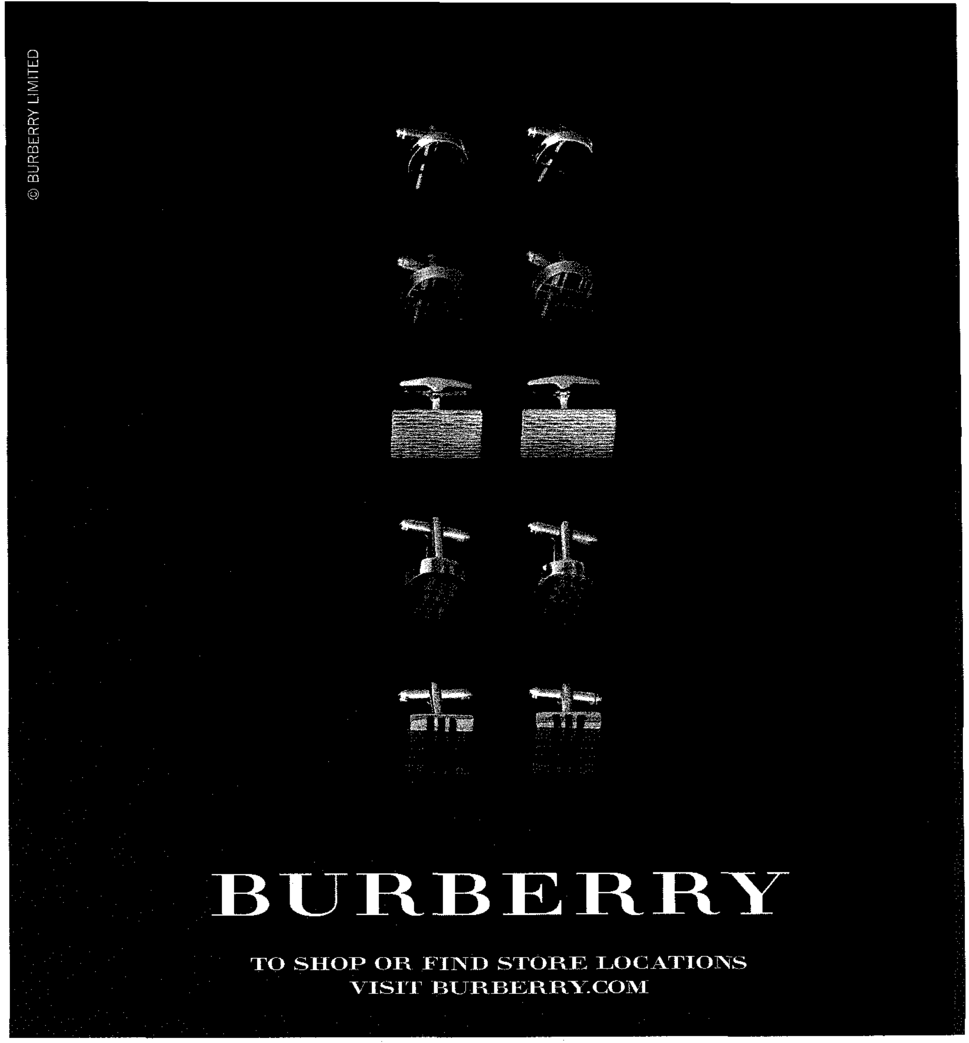
JOHN CHAMBERLAIN: PaceWildenstein, 545 W. 22nd St. 212-989-4258. Through Dec. 3. **ROLAND FLEXNER:** Golden, 539 W. 23rd St. 212-727-8304. Through Nov. 26. **MONA HATOUM:** Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave., at 18th St. 212-367-7474. Through Dec. 22. **MIKE KELLEY:** Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St. 212-741-1111. Through Dec. 17. **YOUNG SUN LIM / DEAN MONOGENIS:** Stux, 530 W. 25th St. 212-352-1600. Through Nov. 26. **LISE SARFATI:** Milo, 525 W. 25th St. 212-414-0370. Through Nov. 26. **KEN SCHLES:** Schoormans, 508 W. 26th St. 212-243-3159. Through Dec. 17. **NANCY SPERO:** Lelong, 528 W. 26th St. 212-315-0470. Through Dec. 3. **DOROTHEA TANNING:** Kent, 541 W. 25th St. 212-627-3680. Through Dec. 3. **"VII":** Hasted Hunt, 529 W. 20th St. 212-627-0006. Through Dec. 23. **"TWIXT TWO WORLDS, OR THE UNINVITED GUEST: A MAGICIAN AT THE SÉANCE":** Burgin, 243 W. 18th St. 212-462-2668. Through Dec. 10.

GALLERIES–DOWNTOWN

RAY MORTENSON
Mortenson shows black-and-white photographs from two landscape series that offer a strikingly lucid and rather more informal version of classic modernism. "Cedars"—shown primarily as a group of small contact prints with a soft, subtle platinum finish—focusses on trees growing wild in fields. "Sea & Sky," a suite of especially brilliant silver prints, pictures the surging surf along Rhode Island's rocky shoreline under clear, overcast, and fog-shrouded skies. Echoing Atget and Robert Adams, the work speaks in a familiar photographic language, but it refines the vocabulary with bracing rigor. Through Dec. 4. (Borden, 560 Broadway. 212-431-0166.)

DANCE

"THE NUTCRACKER"
Jerome Robbins liked to recall how only three hours before curtain time on the day of the première of Balanchine's "Nutcracker," in February, 1954, many of the costumes for the show were still unfinished; wordlessly and without reproach, Balanchine sat down among the seamstresses and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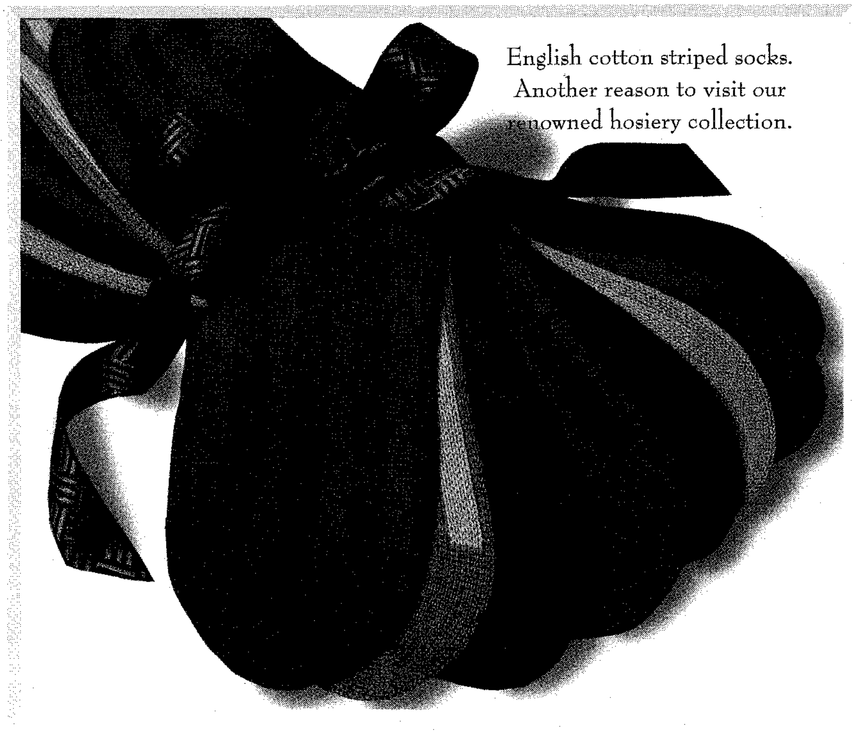
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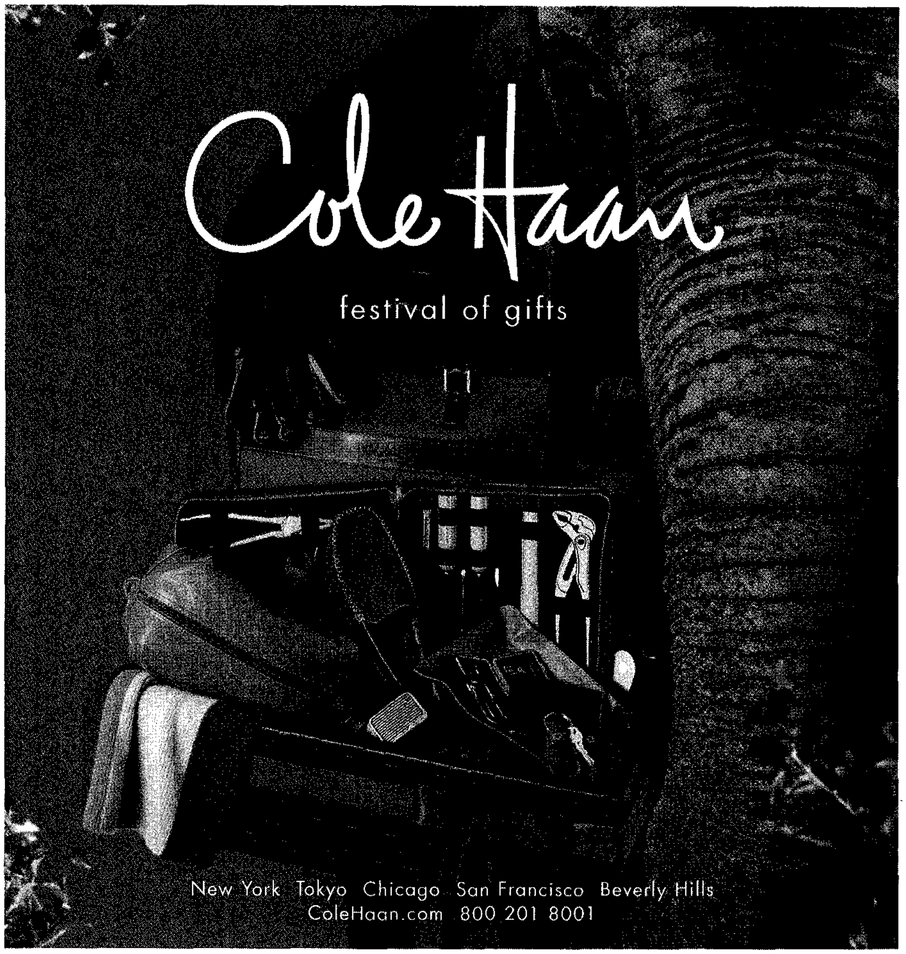
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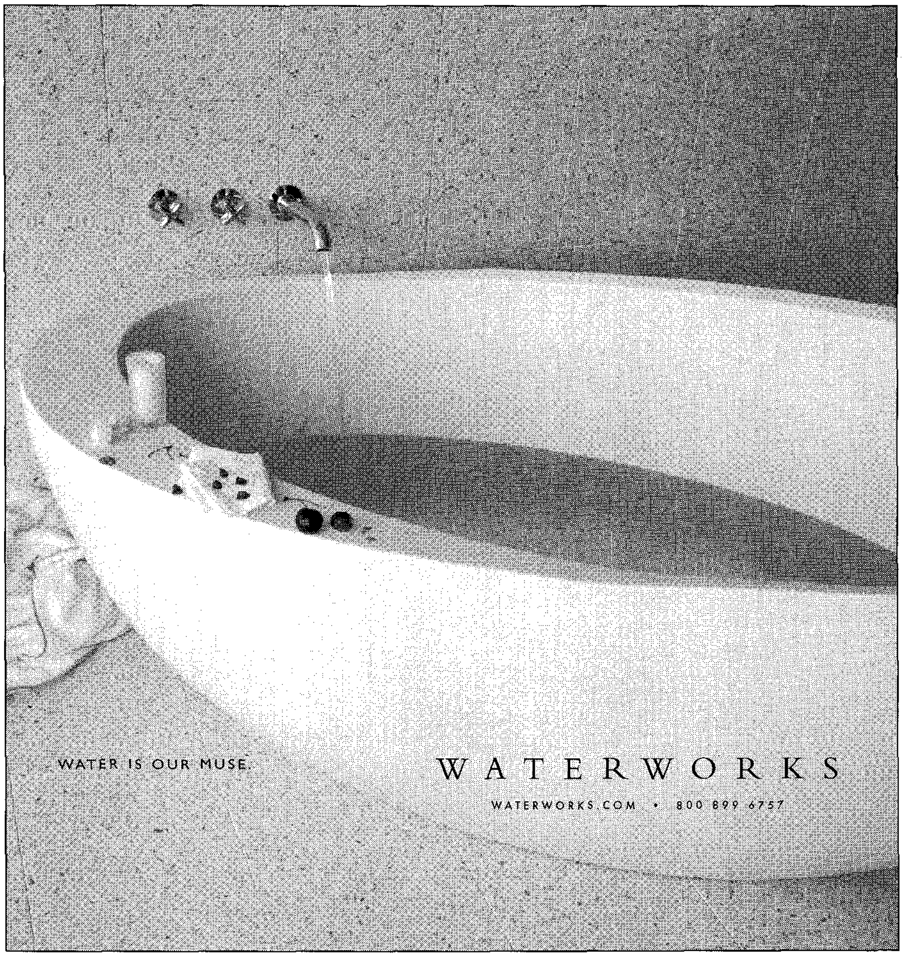


began to sew. At that first performance, Maria Tallchief danced the Sugarplum Fairy with Nicholas Magallanes as her Cavalier; Tanaquil LeClercq was Dewdrop. The five weeks of New York City Ballet's performances of "The Nutcracker" at Lincoln Center are an opportunity to see many of the company's principals and up-and-coming dancers alternate in these roles, as well as several dozen student dancers from the School of American Ballet performing roles including Marie, Uncle Drosselmeier's nephew, the nasty mice, and the always adorable angels. Casts are announced on the company's Web site one week in advance. (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 212-870-5570. Nov. 25 at 8, Nov. 26 at 2 and 8, Nov. 27 at 1 and 5, and Nov. 29 at 6. Through Dec. 30.)

JAZZ TAP ENSEMBLE
For their visit to the Joyce this year, the tappers from California bring two new song suites and a singer. One suite is a collection of Thelonious Monk compositions, the other a Brazilian medley, but the singer, Kate McGarry, can handle both with aplomb. And, in the best tradition of the group she joins, she has the improvisational daring to erase the divide between dancers and accompanists. Also joining the topnotch roster of Lynn Dally, Channing Cook Holmes, and Joseph and Josette Wiggan is the sly New York hoofer Ayodele Casel. (175 Eighth Ave. 212-242-0800. Nov. 22-23 at 8, Nov. 25-26 at 2 and 8, and Nov. 27 at 2 and 7:30.)

GOLDEN DRAGON ACROBATS
The troupe from Henan, China, specializes in two types of precarious acts: alarming stunts (gymnast balancing on chair atop ladder) and ultimate rainy-day projects (contortionist supporting a hundred water glasses on hands, feet, and face). The bejewelled women have expressive, curling fingers and extraordinary muscle control; the men twirl long sticks and scamper up poles. The dead-on bicycle tricks, opulent lion costumes, and synchronized juggling acrobats may be hokey, but they still induce gasps. (New Victory Theatre, 209 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200. Nov. 23 and Nov. 25-26 at 2 and 7 and Nov. 27 at noon and 5. Through Jan. 1.)

BATSHEVA DANCE COMPANY
The Israeli choreographer Ohad Naharin is known for making electrifying dances, which explains in part why the New York première of "Mamootot" (2003) is already sold out. The nine dancers are dressed like unmasked fencers and surrounded by spectators; the smallish space is lit steadily, like a gymnasium. Moving to kinetic Japanese rock and electronica, the dancers shift abruptly from one texture to another: snaky shoulders, necks jerking backward, a forceful waltz hold. (Mark Morris Dance Center, 3 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100. Nov. 23 and Nov. 25 at 7:30, Nov. 26 at 7:30 and 9:30, and Nov. 27 at 3.)

"FRESH TRACKS"
For the fortieth consecutive year, a Dance Theatre Workshop jury handpicks six emerging choreographers for its esteemed showcase of new work. Having launched the likes of Bill T. Jones, David Parsons, and Donald Byrd, the festival is both a coveted gig and a quick way to take the pulse of downtown dance's next generation. Among this year's artists, stark minimalism is the preferred mode, with Rachel Bernsen performing a silent, restrictive solo at center stage and Isabel Lewis choreographing a spare, workmanlike trio. Chase Granoff and his collaborator Jon Moniaci interact with a pile of sound equipment, while John Wyszniewski begins his solo confined in a box and swaddled in bubble wrap. (219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. Nov. 25-26 at 7:30.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
Nov. 23 and Nov. 29 at 8: Bizet's **"Carmen"** returns to the repertory, with a superb young conductor (Philippe Jordan) and a Micaëla making her début (Ana Maria Martinez); the redoubtable Denyce Graves and Marcello Giordani are Carmen and Don José. (Eduardo Villa sings the role of Don José on Nov.

29.) ♦ Nov. 26 at 1:30: With Nancy Fabiola Herrera replacing Graves. ♦ Nov. 25 and Nov. 28 at 8: The Met is big into Gounod lately, and after the undisciplined invention of Andrei Serban's "Faust" last season, Guy Joosten's placid production of **"Roméo et Juliette"** is probably a relief: on a turntable set inscribed with astrological symbols, the Shakespearean characters, clad in predictable period costumes, play their scenes surrounded by imagery that brings to mind Escher, Leonardo, and the Hubble Space Telescope. (Star-crossed lovers, indeed.) As Roméo, Ramón Vargas gives a performance of heroic facture, gorgeously showing off his elegant phrasing and solid high notes; the excellent young baritone Stéphane Degout, making his Met début, lends his dark jewel of a voice to the role of Mercutio. (Natalie Dessay is scheduled to sing the role of Juliette.) The orchestra, responding fully to the direction of Bertrand de Billy, offers a committed performance full of style, thrust, and speed. ♦ Nov. 26 at 8: **"La Bohème,"** with Ruth Ann Swenson and Frank Lopardo as Mimì and Rodolfo, and Emily Pulley and Vassily Gerello as Musetta and Marcello; Philippe Auguin conducts. (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
Lorin Maazel, bringing his orchestra back from a European tour, conducts a program that intriguingly blends the ancient and the new. Colin Matthews's "Berceuse for Dresden" (in its American première) was written to commemorate the rebuilding of the city's magnificent Frauenkirche, which was destroyed in the Allied firebombing of 1945. Its prominent solo-cello part will be taken by Jan Vogler, a smart and probing young German cellist making his Philharmonic subscription début, who will also offer Schumann's Cello Concerto. Dvořák's "New World" Symphony, a Maazel specialty, completes the program. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656. Nov. 25-26 at 8.)

BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
The beloved mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt Lieberson is scheduled to make a rare appearance on the B.S.O.'s latest Carnegie Hall program, singing the New York première of a piece by a composer close to home—"Neruda Songs," by her distinguished husband, Peter Lieberson. James Levine conducts the concert, which also includes Strauss's "Till Eulenspiegel" and Mahler's Symphony No. 4 in G Major (featuring another esteemed singer, the soprano Dorothea Röschmann). (212-247-7800. Nov. 28 at 8.)

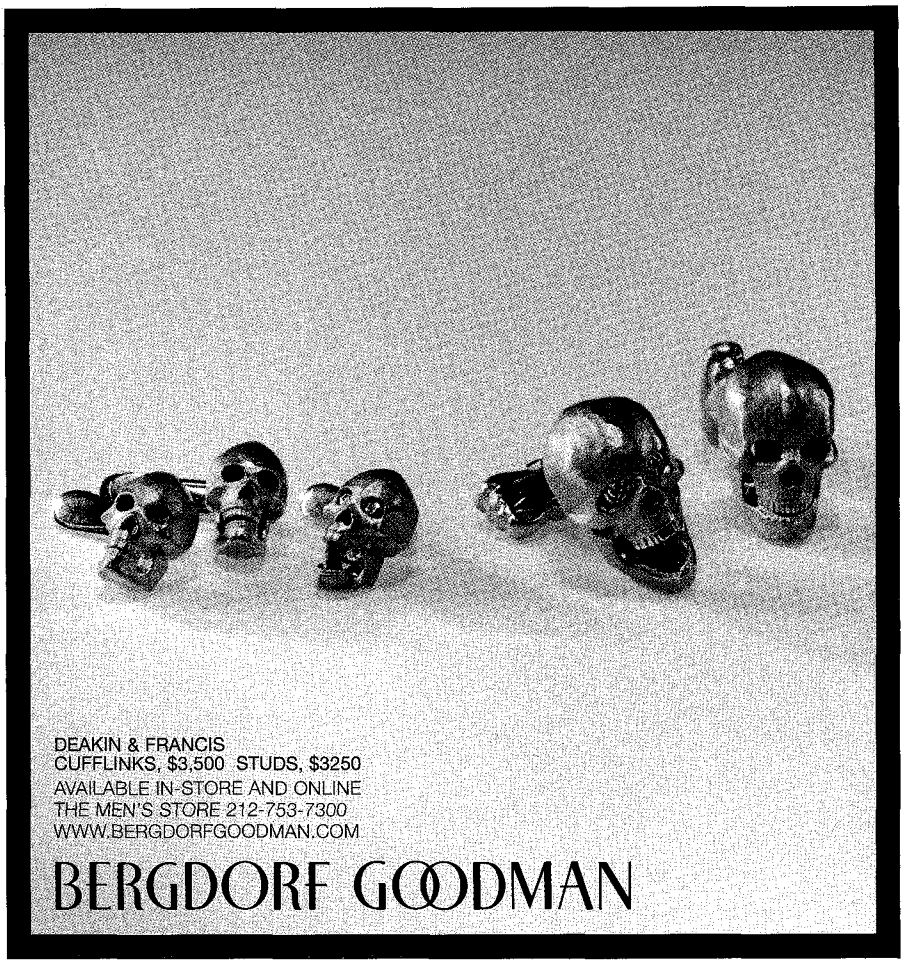
NEW YORK YOUTH SYMPHONY
Carter Brey, the principal cellist of the New York Philharmonic, is the special guest on this excellent ensemble's next program, soloing in Dvořák's Cello Concerto. It will be preceded by both Bernstein's "Candide" Overture and the world première of "Axiom," by the young composer Ryan Anthony Francis; Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 follows it. Paul Haas conducts. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Nov. 27 at 2.)

BACH VESPERS AT HOLY TRINITY
For thirty-eight years Holy Trinity Lutheran Church has been offering regular performances of the Bach Cantatas—not only with the intimate forces Bach would have recognized, but in coördination with the liturgical calendar by which he composed them. This Sunday brings the Cantata No. 36 ("Schwingt freudig euch empor"), with the cantor Rick Erickson conducting the Bach Choir and Players. (Central Park W. at 65th St. Nov. 27 at 5. A donation is suggested.)

RECITALS

"MIDTOWN CONCERTS": ARTEK
The fortepianist Gwendolyn Toth, with friends, performs a brief lunchtime program of piano trios by Haydn at the Church of St. Francis of Assisi. (135 W. 31st St. Nov. 23 at 1:15. No tickets required.)

BARGEMUSIC
The violinist Mark Peskanov, the cellist Peter Bruns, and the pianist Vladimir Stoupel settle in for the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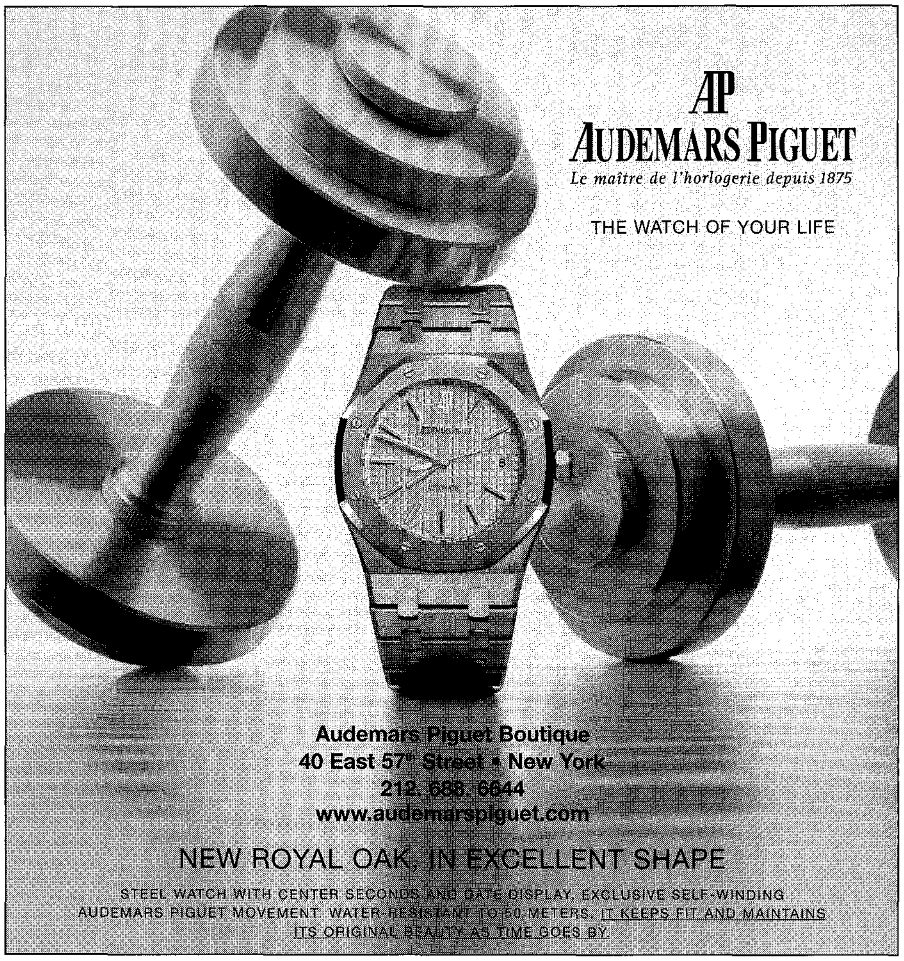
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weekend at the floating chamber-music series. Nov. 24-25 at 7:30: Haydn's Piano Trio in E Major, Brahms's Cello Sonata in E Minor, Op. 38, and the second (and most mysterious) of Brahms's piano trios—in C Major, Op. 87. ♦ Nov. 26 at 7:30 and Nov. 27 at 4: Haydn's Trio in F-Sharp Minor and two more works by Brahms—the Cello Sonata in F Major, Op. 99, and the Trio in C Minor, Op. 101. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

"PIANO TRIOS PLUS"

The pianist Robert Frankenberry, the violinist Roger Zahab, the violist Tanya Maggi, and the cellist David Russell perform works for trio and quartet by Lee Hyla (the New York première of "Amnesia Redux"), Judith Weir (the U.S. première of Piano Trio Two), and others. (St. Peter's Church in Chelsea, 346 W. 20th St. Nov. 26 at 7:30. Tickets at the door.)

THE QUEEN'S CHAMBER TRIO

In a week that boasts a bumper crop of keyboard-trio concerts, the harpsichordist Elaine Comparone joins the violinist Robert Zubrycki and the cellist Peter Seidenberg in an unusual one—music by Mozart (the Piano Quartet in G Minor, with the violist Veronica Salas) and Marin Marais along with some very early Beethoven (the Trio in C Minor, Op. 1, No. 3). (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Nov. 27 at 2.)

MUSIC AT THE FRICK COLLECTION: CHRISTIAN IMMLER

A malty-voiced young German baritone makes his New York recital début along with the pianist Silvia Fraser, who accompanies him in Schumann's "Dichterliebe" as well as songs by Eisler, Ravel ("Don Quichotte à Dulcinée"), Rankl, and Wolf (five of the "Mörike-Lieder," including "Abschied"). (1 E. 70th St. 212-547-0709. Nov. 27 at 5.)

SIMONE DINNERSTEIN

An impressive young pianist with a resonant sound offers a performance of Bach's Goldberg Variations. (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Nov. 28 at 7:30.)

WOLFGANG HOLZMAIR

The renowned Austrian baritone, one of the most devoted and expressive lieder singers around, offers a program of songs by Viennese composers way off the beaten track—Mittler, Zeisl, and Fürstenthal. Russell Ryan accompanies him, at the Austrian Cultural Forum's chic little blond-wood concert hall. (11 E. 52nd St. Nov. 28-29 at 8. For free tickets, which are required, call 212-319-5300.)

JUILLIARD ARTISTS IN CONCERT

The three young artists of the Tchaikovsky Trio offer piano trios by Beethoven (in E-Flat Major, Op. 70, No. 2) and Brahms (in C Minor, Op. 101). (180 Maiden Lane. Nov. 29 at 12:30. No tickets required.)

EARL WILD: "AT 90"

Wild, one of the last remaining links to the grand tradition of piano playing, combines astonishing virtuoso technique with a light and gracious touch. He celebrates his ninetieth birthday at Carnegie Hall with a concert of music by Beethoven, Liszt ("Les Jeux d'Eau à la Villa d'Este"), and Chopin (featuring the Ballades Nos. 1 and 3), along with two of his own transcriptions (including the folk song "Mexican Hat Dance"). (212-247-7800. Nov. 29 at 8.)

SARAH WOLFSON

Wolfson, a soprano and the winner of this year's Alice Tully Vocal Arts Début Recital prize from Juilliard, offers a piquant program of works by Turina, Mussorgsky ("The Nursery"), Wolf (selections from the "Italienisches Liederbuch"), Berio, and Bolcom (a selection of his "Cabaret Songs"). (Alice Tully Hall. 212-721-6500. Nov. 29 at 8.)

TABLES FOR TWO
VINNY VINCENZ'S PIZZAMOBILE

W. 40th St. at Broadway (212-674-0707)—Every weekday around noon, John (Kid) Lynch swings his red step van into his spot on West Fortieth Street, just east of Broadway. The ovens inside the van's fifty-square-foot galley are hot, having been fired up before he left Vinny Vincenz, a pizzeria on First Avenue and Fourteenth Street, where the dough is laid out. Once he's parked, Lynch spreads the shredded mozzarella and cooked red sauce and slams the square pan into the top oven. Though the herbed sauce is the owner's secret family recipe and the crust is always as nice and thin at the downtown store, slices seem better from the truck. It might be the high turnover, or Lynch's touch and timing—he says he knows by smell when the pie is done—but it's among the best in midtown. And it is nearly as good as what you can find at the sacred halls of the pizza hounds. "L & B Spumoni is my place in Bensonhurst," he says. "That's where God goes for pizza."

Lynch has been, among other things, the drummer for the band Yuppicide, an assistant to the artist Peter Max, and a chef de cuisine in the basement of CBGB. During the nine months that his pizza truck has been jockeying for position on this corner, he has befriended the halal-cart guy across the street, the pretty subway worker who gives him change, and the neighborhood cops. He knows that some people are reluctant to buy food off a truck and worries that the Department of Health might raid him at any moment, so he's vigilant about following the health codes. Customers are offered an encouraging "Excellent choice!" when they order, although there's only Sicilian, with no toppings (it's possible he'll have enough chicken or meatballs for a couple of parmigiana sandwiches).

One recent afternoon, a blue moving truck hit the brakes partway through its turn onto West Fortieth. "One slice! One slice!" one of the three men inside wearing blue coveralls yelled. For a minute, the intersection was frozen while the driver passed money across his co-workers and they passed the slice back—as smooth as a ballpark-bleacher transaction. (Open Mondays through Fridays for lunch. Slices $2.)

—*Owen Phillips*

MOVIES OPENING

DOWN TO THE BONE

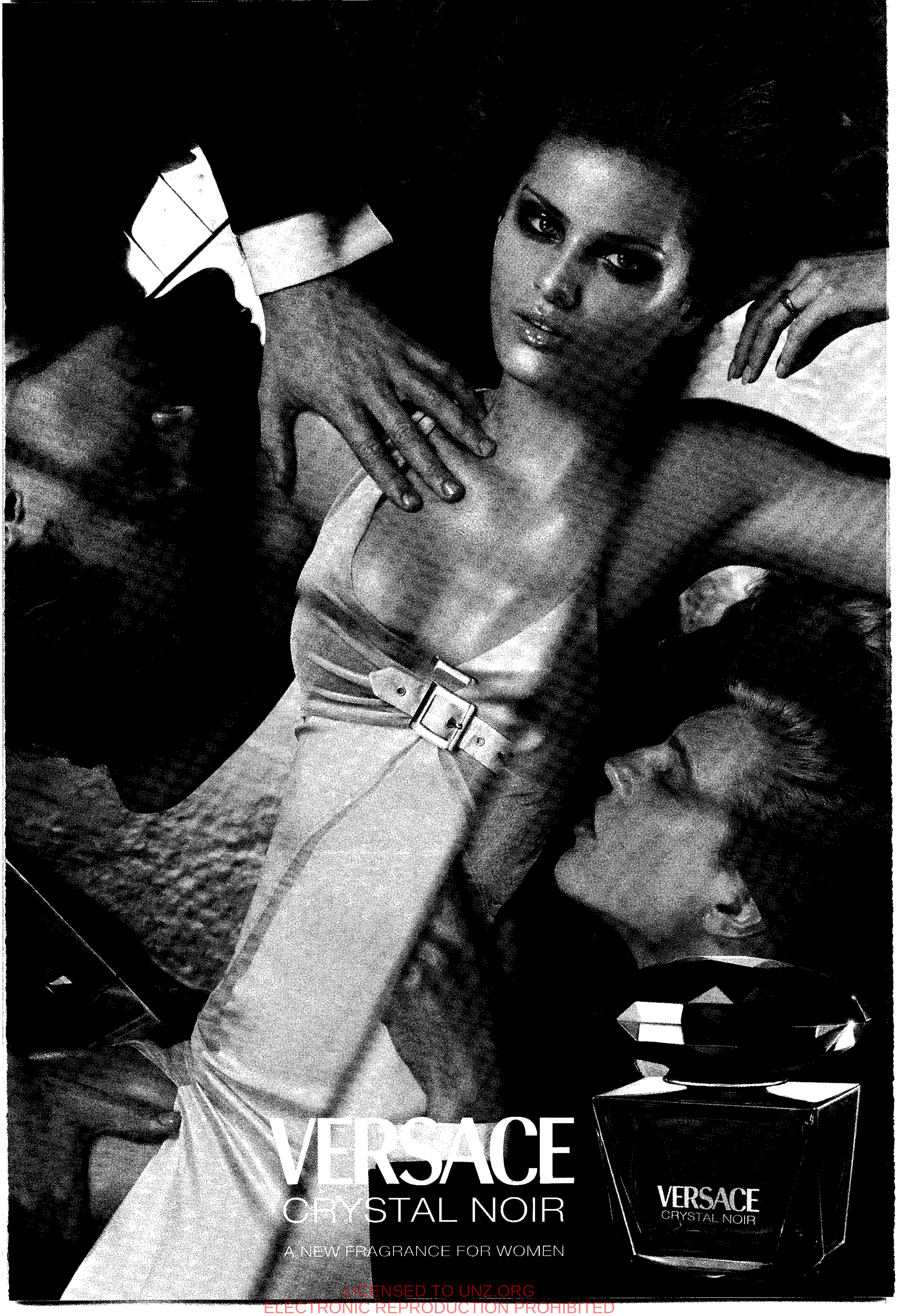
Debra Granik's first feature is a naturalistic drama about a drug addict (Vera Farmiga) trying to raise a family. Opening Nov. 25. (Quad Cinema.)

THE ICE HARVEST

A comic thriller, directed by Harold Ramis, about two Wichita lawyers (John Cusack and Billy Bob Thornton) who embezzle millions and try to win over a strip-club manager (Connie Nielsen) on Christmas Eve. Opening Nov. 23. (In wide release.)

IN THE MIX

In this romantic comedy, a d.j. (Usher) saves the daughter (Emmanuelle Chriqui) of a Mob boss (Chazz Palminteri) and falls in love with her. Directed by Ron Underwood. Opening Nov. 23. (In wide release.)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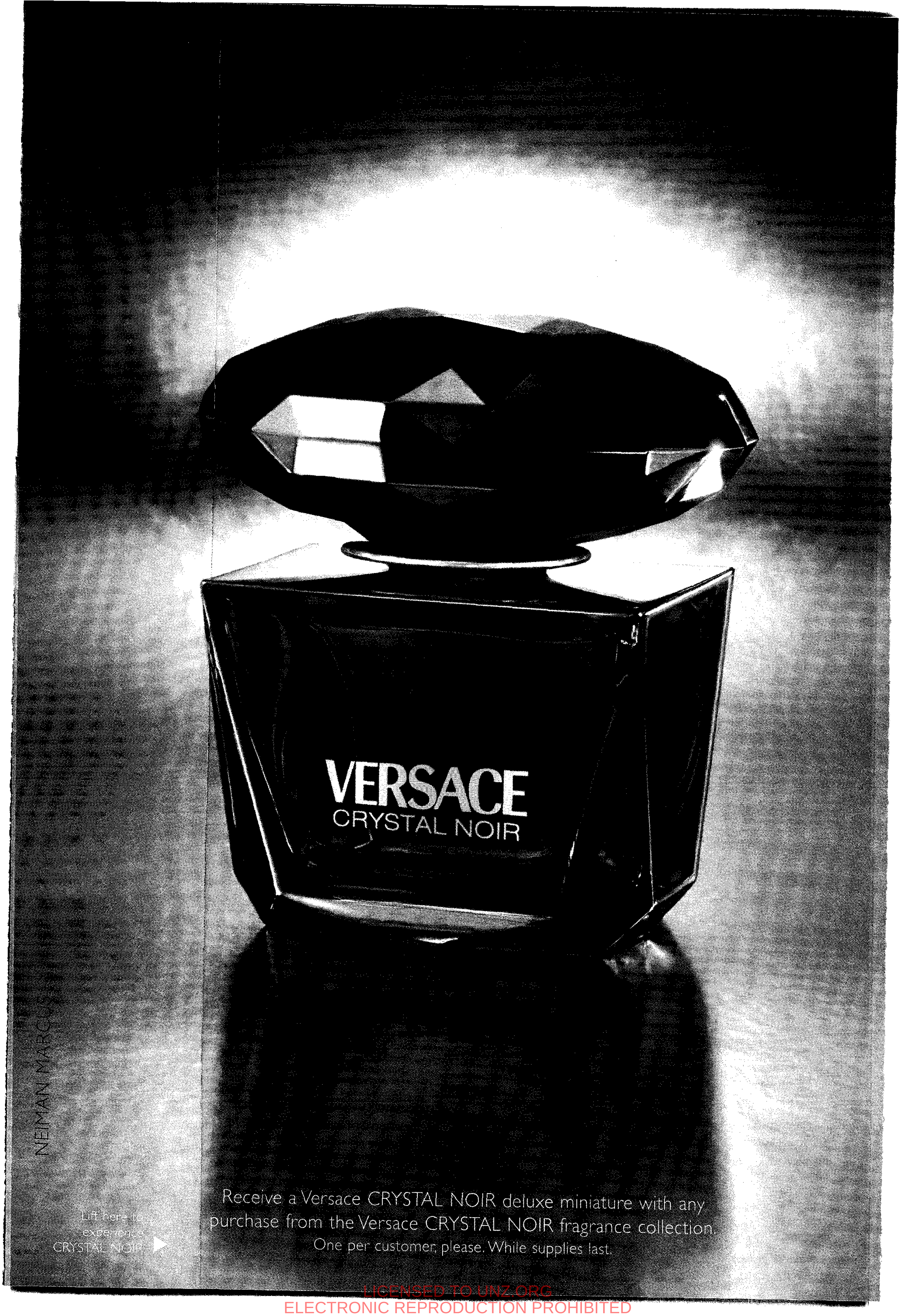
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JUST FRIENDS
Ryan Reynolds plays a former high-school geek, now an L.A. music exec, who gets stranded in his New Jersey home town and falls in love again with his high-school crush. This romantic comedy co-stars Anna Faris, Amy Smart, and Chris Klein. Directed by Roger Kumble ("Cruel Intentions"). Opening Nov. 23. (In wide release.)

THE LIBERTINE
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Nov. 25. (Angelika Film Center.)

MRS. PALFREY AT THE CLAREMONT
Dame Joan Plowright plays a lonely retired woman who befriends a young writer when she trips and falls outside of his basement apartment. Directed by Dan Ireland. Opening Nov. 25. (Paris.)

RENT
Chris Columbus directed this adaptation of Jonathan Larson's rock opera. With Rosario Dawson and Taye Diggs. Opening Nov. 23. (In wide release.)

SEAMLESS
Douglas Keeve ("Unzipped") directed this documentary about four young aspiring fashion designers. Opening Nov. 25. (Cinema Village.)

SYRIANA
Stephen Gaghan (the writer of "Traffic") wrote and directed this political thriller about the global oil trade. With George Clooney, Matt Damon, Jeffrey Wright, Chris Cooper, Tim Blake Nelson, and Amanda Peet. Opening Nov. 23. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

39 POUNDS OF LOVE
A documentary by Dani Menkin about an Israeli man with a rare form of muscular dystrophy, who weighs just thirty-nine pounds at age thirty-four and searches for the doctor who predicted that he would die in childhood. In English and Hebrew. Opening Nov. 23. (Sunshine Cinema.)

YOURS, MINE, AND OURS
A remake of the family comedy from 1968, in which a widow and a widower get married, bringing together in one family her ten children and his eight. With Dennis Quaid, Rene Russo, and Linda Hunt. Directed by Raja Gosnell. Opening Nov. 23. (In wide release.)

NOW PLAYING

BALLETS RUSSES
The legendary company, founded in Paris in 1909, used designs and costumes by the likes of Dali, Picasso, and Matisse. It split into two competing troupes, both of which toured the world and brought classical dance to small-town America. The filmmakers Daniel Geller and Dayna Goldfine blend performance footage stretching back to the nineteen-thirties with recent interviews with surviving members—all of them sharp, spry, and funny. The retired dancers relate their triumphs and trials, describe the politics and personalities, and deliver some technical insights as well as plenty of backstage gossip. It's a rich, lovely history lesson, although it plays more like a PBS documentary than a truly exceptional moviegoing experience.—*Ken Marks* (Film Forum.)

BEE SEASON
Young Eliza Naumann (Flora Cross) is a champion speller. This is a source of warm satisfaction to her father (Richard Gere), who not only thrums with ambition for his children but also, as a Kabbalistic scholar, asserts that words can grant access to the divine—a theory that is less likely to be embraced by anybody listening to the script of this movie. Eliza has a brother (Max Minghella) who is shopping around for religious experience, and a mother (Juliette Binoche) whose kleptomaniac leanings point to a calamity in her past. All in all, a happy California family, and if you expect to get a laugh, or even a fleeting smile, out of their wide range of dysfunctions, think again. Every tremor is treated with a frowning solemnity, and only the haunted performances of the two younger actors keep the movie alive. The spelling bees in which Eliza competes are drained of all drama by the floating, phantasmagoric style that is favored by the directors, Scott McGehee and David Siegel. Previously, they enjoyed some success with "The Deep End." This time, regrettably, they have moved to the other end of the pool.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 11/14/05.) (In wide release.)

CAPOTE
How could Truman Capote, with his high, thin, goose-quill voice and his floating palms, possibly have gained the trust of the straightforward men and women of Holcomb, Kansas, when he went there for this magazine in 1959 to investigate the pointless slaughter of four members of the Clutter family—the murders that became the subject of Capote's masterpiece, "In Cold Blood"? The writer Dan Futterman and the director Bennett Miller tell us how, and the wonderful Philip Seymour Hoffman first captures Capote physically and then works inward to the vulnerable yet rotting soul. This is easily the most intelligent and detailed film ever made about a writer's working method and character. When Capote gets a look at one of the murderers, Perry Smith (Clifton Collins, Jr.), the focus of the movie becomes the intimate, artistically necessary but morally questionable relation between artist and felon. With Catherine Keener as the novelist Harper Lee; Mark Pellegrino as Perry's partner, Dick Hickock; and Bob Balaban as the *New Yorker* editor William Shawn, who is pictured, bizarrely, as hungry for the bloody details of the crime.—*David Denby* (10/10/05) (In wide release.)

CHICKEN LITTLE
Disney's attempt to compete with Pixar at computer animation falls a bit flat. The barnyard fable, about a nerdy, alarmist chick (voiced by Zach Braff), is given an updated, almost Spielbergian spin involving flying saucers and single-parent issues. The film relies on an abundance of pop-culture references and a busy, imaginative design, but only the voice talent raises it above the mediocre. With the King of the Littles, Steve Zahn ("Stuart Little," "Dr. Dolittle 2"), as a large, Streisand-loving piglet named Runt and the always welcome Joan Cusack as Abby Mallard, the duck with a crush.—*Bruce Diones* (In wide release.)

CLASSE TOUS RISQUES
After a job in Italy turns deadly, a career criminal, Abel Davos (the moody, hulking Lino Ventura), flees to his native France with his family in tow. His wife is killed in a shootout with border guards, and his old underworld friends can't help—but a new one, Eric Stark (a coolly sardonic Jean-Paul Belmondo), can. Hiding out in Paris, Davos needs a wad of money and one more great escape. The genre is the criminal procedural, and the intricate story comes from a novel by José Giovanni, himself a former criminal—but the whole film plays like a feature-length exposition for a one-shot ending. The director Claude Sautet's second feature, released in 1960, is the last best hope of the French Old Wave: the black-and-white images seem lacquered to a high gloss, and the script and performances are controlled to the vanishing point of reality. If its tight emotional modulations derive from several bracing coups de théâtre, the thick, unyielding atmosphere is broken by only a few coups de cinéma. In French.—*Richard Brody* (Film Forum.)

THE DYING GAUL
For most of its running time, Craig Lucas's adaptation of his 1998 Off-Broadway hit is an intriguing study of love and betrayal. The story of a grieving screenwriter (Peter Sarsgaard) and the married studio executive (Campbell Scott) with whom he has an affair while rewriting his screenplay develops into an uncomfortable, sexy secrets-and-lies triangle. But once Sarsgaard's character finds out that his lover's wife (Patricia Clarkson) knows of the affair, the film takes a tragic detour so thoroughly unconvincing that it betrays the rich and complex situations that have preceded it. Still, Clarkson and Scott turn in beautifully modulated performances, and Sarsgaard, up until his baffling character change, is moving and intensely sympathetic. Lucas's bold, theatrical direction suits his material; the dramatic, high-strung dialogue pings around the large spaces like balls in a pinball

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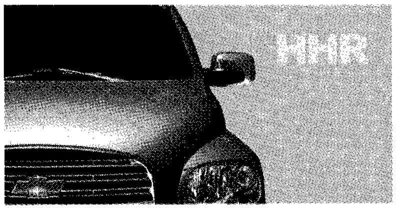

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AN AMERICAN REVOLUTION

machine. It's a compelling failure.—*B.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas.)

GET RICH OR DIE TRYIN'

While rappers like Ludacris and Mos Def come to their acting performances fully stoked, the rapper Curtis (50 Cent) Jackson is content to cruise along on his tough-guy image. His stoic presence is not enough to elevate this "8 Mile" wannabe. The gangsta clichés of a drug dealer turned rapper, loosely based on Jackson's life, move along with the usual tabloid enthusiasm. Yet the story—of a fatherless boy who takes to selling drugs and buying a gun, a robbery gone wrong, a prison term, and the eventual redemption through music—is vaguely motivated and anecdotal. For fans of 50 Cent, the film is a redundant play-by-play of his rap lyrics; for others, it's a poorly constructed urban fairy tale that's more murky than gritty.—*B.D.* (In wide release.)

GOOD NIGHT, AND GOOD LUCK

George Clooney's nifty account of Edward R. Murrow's historic prime-time assaults on Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, in 1954, imitates many of Murrow's best qualities—it's swift, elegant, grimly humorous, and effective. David Strathairn gets the suavely streamlined Murrow perfectly—the pomaded jet-black hair, the thick brows and unblinking eyes, the curt, rhyming syntax and firm emphasis. Clooney's most serious intention appears to be to deliver a blow to the patella of a somnolent American press that, until recently, has indulged the Bush Administration's most extravagant smears and lies. He has completely succeeded. With Clooney himself as Murrow's partner, Fred Friendly, and Frank Langella as the CBS chairman William S. Paley. Robert Elswit did the black-and-white cinematography, which matches kinescopes of McCarthy's actual speeches.—*D.D.* (10/10/05) (In wide release.)

HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (In wide release.)

JARHEAD

An ambiguous and unsatisfying celebration of a barbarian warrior caste. Initially, the director, Sam Mendes, and the writer, William Broyles, Jr., adapting Anthony Swofford's 2003 memoir about the Marines in the first Gulf War, seem to have made the latest version of a traditional American narrative: a young man enters the military, undergoes bewildering ordeals, ships off to war, and finds out who he is. The hero, Swofford himself (Jake Gyllenhaal), gets pounded by officers, first by a drill instructor and then by the sergeant (Jamie Foxx) who heads his special Marine unit, and hazed by his buddies. Muscled and primed, the Marines arrive in Saudi Arabia in the fall of 1990—and wait in the desert. As the coalition forces slowly build up, the men train, horse around, and think obsessively about their girlfriends at home. But they never do get into the war, except peripherally, and, since the question of courage and character is left up in the air, we wonder, in the end, why the material wasn't played more ironically, or for laughs. Mendes and the cinematographer, Roger Deakins, produce some astonishing scenes—soldiers seemingly turning into sand crabs, oil fires at night—but without the test of combat the men come off as infantile and self-pitying. With Peter Sarsgaard.—*D.D.* (11/7/05) (In wide release.)

KISS KISS, BANG BANG

Robert Downey, Jr., plays Harry Lockhart, a New York thief who stumbles into a movie audition and winds up in L.A., where the preparation for his screen test is aided by a private detective known as Gay Perry (Val Kilmer). For good measure, Harry bumps into an old friend, Harmony (Michelle Monaghan), from his Indiana days. At this point, needless to say, real bodies start to accrue, and real—if comically untroubling—crimes demand to be solved. The writer and director, Shane Black, wants both to reanimate and to mock the devices of pulp, from Raymond Chandler downward; such knowingness occupies him so intensely that, by the end, he is falling over himself trying to tie up the threads of plot, none of which mattered in the first place. The result should be painful to behold, yet somehow it comes off; all three leads, especially Downey, get high on the fizz of the project, and the fussy, needful patter between him and Kilmer feels like it could rattle on forever.—*A.L.* (10/31/05) (In wide release.)

MAN WITH A MOVIE CAMERA

Dziga Vertov celebrates the dynamic variety of quotidian urban life in his silent masterpiece from 1929, the apex of the symphony-of-the-street movie. Setting a prototypical cameraman loose to chronicle an unnamed Soviet metropolis from dawn to dusk, he records the commotion on the boulevard and in the trolley yard, the kinetics of newfangled exercise machines that would fit right into today's infomercials, and the goofiness and chagrin at a bureau that handles both divorce and marriage. A protean stylist, Vertov deploys every device from split and superimposed images to pixellation and freeze-frames; his film has wit as well as gusto, a clearheaded lyricism, and a robust, sometimes vaudevillian humor. (Was he the first to cut from a supine woman to a hurtling train?)—*Michael Sragow* (Anthology Film Archives; Nov. 27.)

"Rent," directed by Chris Columbus, opens Nov. 23.

ULLA PUGGAARD

NORTH COUNTRY

The director Niki Caro, who caused a stir with "Whale Rider," has shifted her gaze from her native New Zealand to the iron mines of Minnesota, a more forbidding prospect altogether. It is there that Josey (Charlize Theron) comes to make a new start, bringing her two children from a bruised marriage. With the encouragement of her friend Glory (Frances McDormand), Josey takes a job at the mines, runs head first into the brutish scorn of the male workers, and determines to do something about it. On paper, Caro's film sounds worthy to the point of glumness, and viewers digging for humor will find little cheer; as was the case, though, with campaigning pictures like "Silkwood" and "Norma Rae," any fears that the story will slacken or slump are dispelled by the drive of the performances. Theron's anger is all too credible, and she is backed by such formidable team players as Sissy Spacek and Richard Jenkins, in the role of Josey's parents, and Michelle Monaghan, who plays her young, despairing colleague.—*A.L.* (10/31/05) (In wide release.)

THE PASSENGER

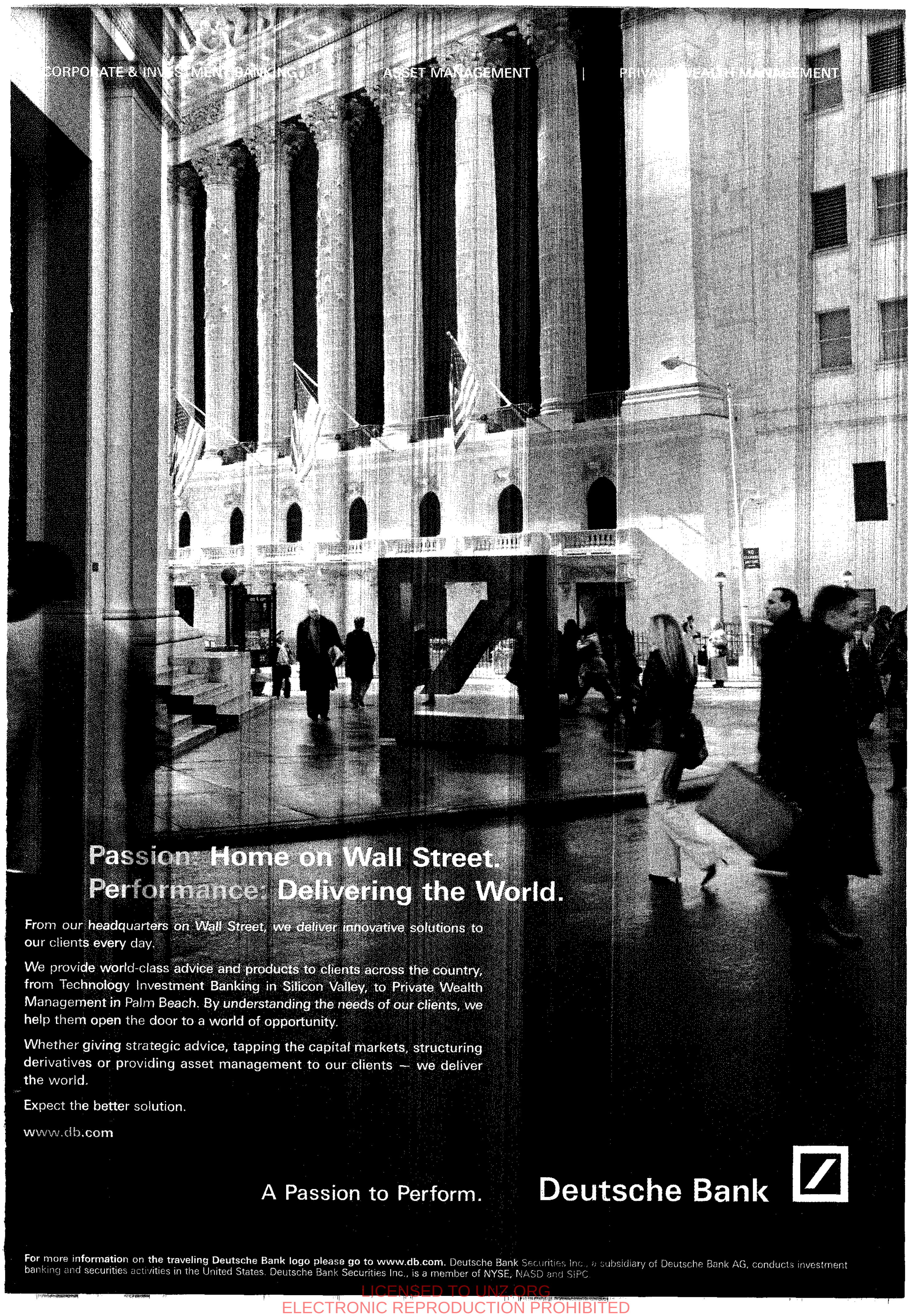
In Michelangelo Antonioni's film, from 1975, David Locke (Jack Nicholson at his most sly and insinuating), a documentary filmmaker reporting on conflicts in Africa, takes the identity of a dead man whose mysterious activities turn out to be risky business. Antonioni, the poet of alienation in a media-stoked society, gets behind the images in this muted comedy of a journalist's folly. Escaping from himself, Locke flees to the natural and architectural landscapes of Western Europe, which Antonioni films with a singular sensuousness. The Continent's intricate charms come off as the ideal environment for claiming—or concealing—identities. Maria Schneider plays a nameless beauty who follows Locke in his new destiny, yet the film's visual allure is more real than any of the characters. Nonetheless, Nicholson's quietly caustic voice, calling for help when he expects none, infuses the potentially sententious setup with a self-mocking humor.—*R.B.* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

PRIDE & PREJUDICE

Yet another Jane Austen adaptation. She must have one hell of an agent. On this occasion, Lizzie Bennet is played by Keira Knightley, who maintains the steady rate of corseted gasps that she began in "Pirates of the Caribbean"; Mr. Bennet, by Donald Sutherland, who looks richly amused, as he should, and slightly bewildered, as maybe he shouldn't; and Lizzie's older sister, the trusting Jane, by Rosamund Pike. Every reader of the book has a jealous, private notion of what Mr. Darcy should look like, and many female viewers have already testified that the latest incarnation, Matthew Macfadyen, fits the bill. Why, however, is he perennially downcast? Is he saddened by his own reputation for sternness, or has he just seen the gardening bills for his country estate? The screenwriter, Deborah Moggach, whips the tale along at a gallop, yet at times it slows beneath an unwelcome weight of mood. The director, Joe Wright, has a taste for guttering darkness and lashing rain, which suggests that he won't rest easy until he gets his hands on "Wuthering Heights." With Brenda Blethyn as the mother hen of the Bennet brood and Tom Hollander as the tiny yet preposterous Mr. Collins.—*A.L.* (11/14/05) (In wide release.)

PRIME

Meryl Streep gives one of her wittiest performances in Ben Younger's comedy about a middle-aged Jewish hausfrau-therapist from the Upper West Side who discovers that a longtime patient, a thirty-seven-year-old divorcée (Uma Thurman), is dating her handsome twenty-three-year-old son (Bryan Greenberg). Streep fidgets and rotates her neck and



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CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
SON IS SHINING

Damian Marley, twenty-seven years old and the youngest of Bob Marley's seven sons, has achieved something unique in a family not short on distinction: his third album, "Welcome to Jamrock," débuted on the Billboard 200 at No. 7, better than any of his father's albums. "Welcome to Jamrock" is selling on the back of the powerful title track, which has become a crossover hit partially because it sounds like older reggae, which may reassure those who feel assaulted by the computer rhythms of modern Jamaican dancehall. The song actually is old reggae—it features a large quote of Ini Kamoze's early-eighties single "World-a-Music." But it is the vocal sample—"Out in the street they call it murder"—that sets the tone. The song takes a long, hard look at modern Jamaica, where thugs sell weed to tourists, politicians lie, youth carry guns, and "poor people a dead at random." It's not surprising that "Jamrock" has cropped up so often on mixtapes and radio. It could just as easily be called "Welcome to Paris" or "Welcome to New Orleans." Marley appears at the Nokia Theatre on Dec. 3.

—*Sasha Frere-Jones*

rolls her eyes—it's the broadest work she's ever done. The movie, which shifts from comedy to bittersweet ruefulness, is a little on the tepid side, but it plays easily enough, and Thurman, long and slinky, with golden skin, is irresistible as a woman in love.—*D.D.* (In wide release.)

PULSE
In Kiyoshi Kurosawa's pretentious horror film, the Internet makes its users suicidal. The deed accomplished, the newly dead come and go, as ghosts, through their own personal smudge on the wall. The shock value of these zombielike apparitions is completely vitiated by the unremitting air of artificial glumness that burdens the film from the start, as well as by clunky effects and ham-fisted eerie music. The script's belabored sociological and cosmic explanations of the presumed mystery cost the film any shudder of true uncanniness. A few chillingly apocalyptic moments just before the end are too little, too late. In Japanese.—*R.B.* (IFC Center.)

SARAH SILVERMAN: JESUS IS MAGIC
The comedian Sarah Silverman has the elongated neck and full nostrils of a depraved colt—she's shapely and lean, with a dazzling smile. Her blissfully dirty jokes are sparked by her Jewish-princess appearance; we don't expect girls who look like they're shopping at Saks to be this bawdy. She's not making fun of herself when she talks about sex—she's truly sexual. And, in the sincere tones of an arrogantly uninformed college freshman, she tells us what to think of race. The deadpan putdowns of Martin Luther King and black teen-age girls who get pregnant flirt with racism and parody—the jokes have a teasing danger. This movie is mainly a record of Silverman's standup act in a North Hollywood theatre. There's a rather feeble prelude and epilogue, but the act itself is a terrific introduction to the hippest comic working today. Directed by Liam Lynch.—*D.D.* (In wide release.)

SHOPGIRL
Standing behind a glove counter at Saks in Los Angeles, Claire Danes has an expectant but unfocussed air about her—she's like an enigmatic figure in a painted portrait. In this adaptation of Steve Martin's novella from 2000, the director Anand Tucker lovingly photographs the angular, big-boned Danes in a variety of graceful poses, dressed and undressed. Danes is an appealing woman, but moviegoers may find themselves baffled as to why she must choose between the ferrety Jason Schwartzman and Martin himself, in an inert performance as an aging Lothario who can't give her the love that she needs. The movie offers high-style sets and elegantly blended colors to frame what turns out to be an under-written and under-dramatized story. Written by Martin.—*D.D.* (In wide release.)

THE SQUID AND THE WHALE
The time is 1986, in Brooklyn's idyllic Park Slope, and a family is breaking up. The dad, Bernard (Jeff Daniels), a college literature teacher and an increasingly unsuccessful novelist, has become a sour and selfish liar; the mom, Joan (Laura Linney), can't stop leaving evidence of her love affairs around the house. Trying to hold on to their love for their parents, their two boys fall into increasingly nutty imitative behavior. Walt (Jesse Eisenberg), sixteen, parrots every one of his dad's huffy opinions; Frank (Owen Kline), a twelve-year-old in a sexual uproar, imitates his mom's indiscretions by rubbing his crotch against library shelves and leaving deposits on schoolbooks and lockers. The movie is a satirical comedy—ruthless and heartbreaking—but a comedy nonetheless; the writer-director Noah Baumbach has captured the way educated parents project their self-love and their career anxieties onto bright children, and the way kids respond to the currents of parental misconduct like pilot fish shimmying around a wayward shark. Baumbach's touch is light, sure, devastating. With Anna Paquin as a creative-writing-student hustler and William Baldwin as a sexually available tennis pro.—*D.D.* (10/24/05) (In wide release.)

STRAY DOG
Toshiro Mifune is magnetic as a Tokyo cop obsessed with recovering his gun after it gets picked from his pocket on a crowded bus, but the stars of Akira Kurosawa's amazing crime melodrama are city heat and urban squalor. The movie is an impassioned outcry against social dissolution—Kurosawa sees both Mifune and the thief who goes on a crime spree with the cop's pilfered Colt as products of a brutal postwar environment. The movie has never been more timely, bringing home how much damage can be wrought with a single handgun and a handful of bullets. Released in 1949. In Japanese.—*M.S.* (Museum of Modern Art; Nov. 25 and Nov. 28.)

WALK THE LINE
Joaquin Phoenix, with deep-set blue eyes, a long chin, and a scarred lip, is Johnny Cash; Reese Witherspoon, bouncy and smart, with long black tresses, is his beloved June Carter, of the country-singing Carter clan. Phoenix slings his guitar around and guns it at the audience in Cash's shambling style; his singing wavers in pitch, but, all in all, it's not bad. This biopic, covering Cash's youth and early manhood, written by James Mangold and Gill Dennis and directed by Mangold, is very pleasant but too conventionally conceived. Phoenix looks at times as if he wanted to kill someone, but the filmmakers haven't written anything interesting for him to say, and most of the time Cash comes off as furtive, weak, and lost. As June stares directly at Cash's weaknesses and nails him every time, "Walk the Line" becomes a kind of moralizing romantic comedy, in which he struggles to be a man worthy of her love and she struggles against her desire to have him. The picture offers some sidelong glances at life on the road in the convulsive 1955-56 period, in which country, R. & B., and nascent rock were all sloshing around together. With Robert Patrick as Cash's dead-eyed father and Vivian Loberto as his first wife, who nags at him and wants him to stay home with her and the kids.—*D.D.* (11/21/05) (In wide release.)

THE WEATHER MAN
Chicago midwinter melancholia, rendered in shades of blue and gray. The ice on the lake cracks and shifts, the freezing rain comes down like acid, and David Spritz (Nicolas Cage), the fatuously likable weatherman for a local TV station, gestures in front of a blank screen. Dave can't get the weather right—it's all shifting winds, he says in despair. His life is all shifting winds, too. A forty-year-old child, he feels abashed every time he comes into contact with his father, Robert Spritzel (Michael Caine), a well-known writer whose self-assurance is crushing; Dave's wife (Hope Davis) is leaving him; and his kids are running into trouble. The tone is depressive—even the jokes have a sorry air about them. But the director, Gore Verbinski, and the writer, Steven Conrad, stuck to their conception that the material should play as a belated coming-of-age movie, and the movie has some grit. In all, it's one of those doomed projects that inspire respect.—*D.D.* (11/7/05) (In wide release.)

Also Playing

BREAKFAST ON PLUTO: In wide release. **DERAILED:** In wide release. **GILLES' WIFE:** IFC Center. **A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE:** In wide release. **PARADISE NOW:** In wide release. **THE SYRIAN BRIDE:** Film Forum. **USHPIZIN:** Cinema Village and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

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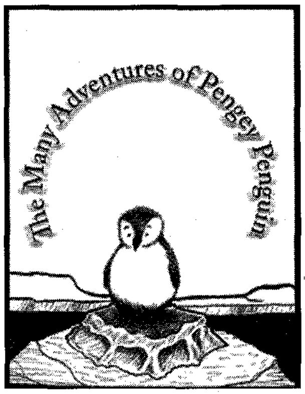
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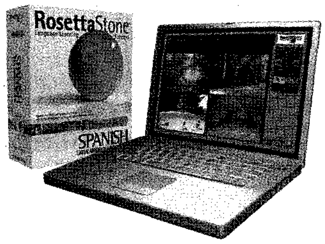

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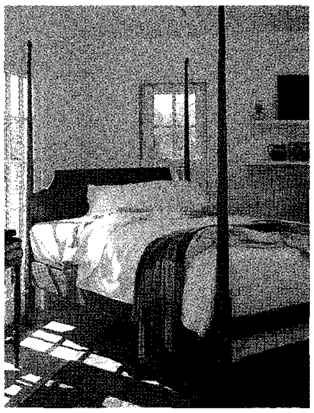

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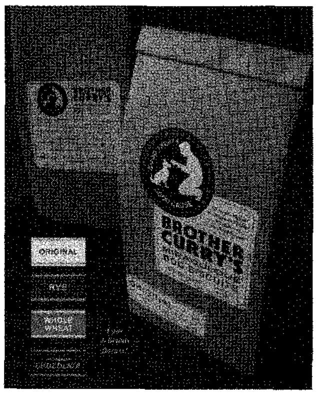

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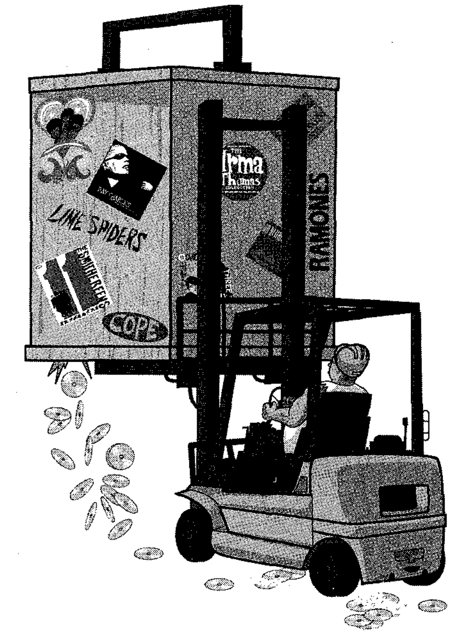
THINKING INSIDE THE BOX



'Tis the season for lavish, elaborately designed, and often overpriced boxed sets that make monuments out of the popular music of years past.

"Children of Nuggets: Original Artyfacts from the Second Psychedelic Era, 1976-1996" (Rhino): Lenny Kaye's original "Nuggets," from 1972, collected the best garage and psychedelic singles from the sixties, and since then the idea has become a franchise. The latest sequel covers everything from the Paisley Underground bands (the Three O'Clock) to Australian rave-up specialists (the Lime Spiders) to New Jersey rockers with a penchant for the British Invasion (the Smithereens). But with four disks and a hundred songs, the set is more diffuse than ambitious, with as many dead spots as highlights.

"The Great American Baseball Box" (Shout! Factory): This entertaining four-disk collection is noteworthy for what it leaves out—DVDs. The material includes songs (John Fogerty's "Centerfield," Dave Frishberg's "Van Lingle Mungo"), snippets of radio broadcasts (Bill Buckner's infamous error), speeches (Babe Ruth's farewell address), and commercial ephemera ("Hit a Home Run with Falstaff Beer!").

"One Kiss Can Lead to Another: Girl Group Sounds Lost and Found" (Rhino): Don't let the black-and-white hatbox packaging fool you: this is one of the toughest and most entertaining boxed sets of the year. Filled with raw emotion, youthful energy, and impeccable production, the teen-melodrama singles here maintain a preposterously high standard, from classics (the Flirtations' "Nothing But a Heartache," Irma Thomas's "Break-a-Way") to obscurities (Dolly Parton's little-known "Don't Drop Out" and Marsha Gee's surreal dance novelty "Peanut Duck").

Jelly Roll Morton, "The Complete Library of Congress Recordings by Alan Lomax" (Rounder): When Jelly Roll Morton sat down with the oral historian Alan Lomax in 1938, Morton was past his prime as a bandleader and composer. He was without compare, however, as a raconteur. The sessions have been released in several different forms, but Rounder's eight-disk set trumps them all: shaped like a piano, it includes interviews with other musicians and a copy of Lomax's biography of Morton. Plus, of course, Morton's stories and songs, which demonstrate how he helped create jazz from a salmagundi of blues, classical, and spirituals.

"Just Say Sire: The Sire Records Story" (Rhino): This set is an antidote to the grab-bag feel of many boxes: the sixty-one songs here directly reflect the taste of Sire Records's founder, Seymour Stein. Every act, from Deborah Harry and Depeche Mode to the Rezillos and the Replacements, was signed by Stein, and this results in a coherent aesthetic: songs are pert and melodic, lyrics idiosyncratic and smart. Stein recognized Talking Heads and Madonna first, but he also understood the durable songwriting skills hidden beneath the improbable haircuts of Soft Cell and Tin Tin.

Talking Heads, "Brick" (Rhino): Talking Heads fans have been waiting a long time for decent CDs of the group's albums; for years, the only ones available were poorly mastered and slapdash. Now, all of the band's eight studio releases have been collected in a white molded plastic box embossed with song titles. Each title is presented as a two-sided disk that also contains a few outtakes and videos. If only more bands would simply improve their digital sound and leave the obscurities and oddities to fanatics.

Also noteworthy: **Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds, "B-Sides & Rarities" (Mute):** Acoustic radio sessions and B-sides illuminate the band's ability to rattle and Cave's mastery of *hummina hummina*. **Ray Charles, "Pure Genius: The Complete Atlantic Recordings 1952-1959" (Rhino):** If you like him live or jazzy, yes—if you're interested mostly in his monumental R. & B., try a smaller set. **The Fall, "The Complete Peel Sessions: 1978-2004" (Castle):** John Peel's favorite band, recorded twenty-four times over almost thirty years, makes a perfect introduction to the repetitive, surreal "country and Northern" sound that launched a thousand lesser indie bands. **Bob Marley and the Wailers, "Soul Revolutionaries: The Early Jamaican Albums" (Trojan):** Portrait of the prophet as a young artist, with Lee Perry's dub version of "Soul Revolution" as a bonus. **The Ramones, "Weird Tales of the Ramones" (Rhino):** The pride of Forest Hills, Queens, gets the royal treatment, with eighty-five songs, a DVD, and a multi-artist comic book complete with a special 3-D strip. **Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys, "Faded Love: 1947-1973" (Bear Family):** Every note recorded by the king of Western swing in the second half of his career, on thirteen CDs and one DVD.

Nov. 27 at 2:15: "Dunia, Kiss Me Not" (2005, Jocelyne Saab; in Arabic). ♦ Nov. 28 at 8:45: "The Importance of Being Elegant" (2004, George Amponsah and Cosima Spender; in French). ♦ Nov. 29 at 2: "Lost Children" (2005, Ali Samadi Ahadi and Oliver Stoltz; in English and Acholi). ♦ Nov. 29 at 4: "Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take 2½" (2005, William Greaves). ♦ "The Films of Chantal Akerman." Nov. 25 at 9: "Toute une Nuit" (1982; in French). ♦ Nov. 26 at 9: "South" (1999). ♦ Nov. 27 at 9: "From the Other Side" (2002; in English, Spanish, and French). ♦ "Essential Cinema." Nov. 26 at 5:30: "Three Songs About Lenin" (1934, Dziga Vertov; in Russian without subtitles). ♦ Nov. 27 at 4:30: "Man with a Movie Camera" (†). ♦ "Storefront Films." Nov. 29 at 7:30: "Themroc" (1973, Claude Faraldo; in French).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS

30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100)—"Spaghetti for Thanksgiving." Nov. 23 at 6:50 and 9:30 and Nov. 24-25 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:30: "Death Rides a Horse" (1967, Giulio Petroni; in Italian). ♦ Nov. 26 at 3, 6, and 9: "My Name Is Nobody" (1973, Tonino Valerii and Sergio Leone). ♦ Nov. 27 at 3, 6, and 9: "The Big Gundown" (1966, Sergio Sollima; in Italian). ♦ Nov. 28 at 6:50 and 9:15: "The Fighting Fists of Shanghai Joe" (1972, Mario Caiano; in Italian).

FILM FORUM

W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—In revival. Nov. 23-29 at 1, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, and 9:40: "Classe Tous Risques" (†).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL

55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—"Cinéma Tuesdays." Nov. 29 at 12:30: "The Truck" (1977, Marguerite Duras; in French).

IFC CENTER

323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—"Waverly Midnights." Nov. 23-26: "Sid and Nancy" (1986, Alex Cox). ♦ "Weekend Classics." Nov. 24-25 and Nov. 27 at noon: "Confidentially Yours" (1983, François Truffaut; in French). ♦ The Antoine Doinel cycle, directed by François Truffaut. All films are in French. Nov. 26 at noon: "The 400 Blows" (1959). ♦ Nov. 26 at 1:50: "Antoine and Colette" (1962) and "Stolen Kisses" (1968). ♦ Nov. 26 at 3:55: "Bed and Board" (1970). ♦ Nov. 26 at 5:50: "Love on the Run" (1979).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—The films of Isabelle Huppert. Nov. 23 at 6: "The Flood" (1994, Igor Minayev; in Russian with French subtitles). ♦ Through Nov. 30: "Poetry and Rigor: The Films of Gianni Amelio." All films are in Italian. Nov. 23 at 6 and Nov. 26 at 1: "The Panisperna Street Boys" (1988). ♦ Nov. 23 at 8:30 and Nov. 26 at 5: "The Way They Laughed" (1998). ♦ Nov. 25 at 5:30: "Blow to the Heart" (1982). ♦ Nov. 25 at 7:30: "Bertolucci According to the Cinema" (1975). ♦ Nov. 25 at 9: "The Little Archimedes" (1978). ♦ Nov. 26 at 3:30: "The End of the Game" (1970). ♦ Nov. 27 at 3: "Peace Is Not Over, So There Is War" (1997) and "Poor Us" (1999). ♦ Nov. 27 at 5: "Open Doors" (1990). ♦ Nov. 28 at 8:30: "The Keys to the House" (2004). ♦ "Early Autumn: Masterworks of Japanese Cinema from the National Film Center, Tokyo." All films are in Japanese. Nov. 23 at 8:15: "The Man Who Disappeared Yesterday" (1941, Masahiro Makino). ♦ Nov. 25 at 6:30: "The Rise of Bandits" (1937, Eisuke Takizawa). ♦ Nov. 25 at 8:30 and Nov. 28 at 6: "Stray Dog" (†). ♦ Nov. 26 at 2: "Band of Assassins" (1962, Satsuo Yamamoto). ♦ Nov. 26 at 6:30: "The Red Peony" (1969, Tai Kato). ♦ Nov. 26 at 8:30: "Rice" (1957, Tadashi Imai). ♦ Nov. 27 at 1 and Nov. 28 at 8:30: "Life of a Striptease Lover" (1968, Tatsumi Kumashiro). ♦ Nov. 27 at 3: Early films by Yasujiro Ozu, Torajiro Saito, and Mikio Naruse (all films are silent). ♦ Nov. 27 at 5: "The Izu Dancer" (1933, Heinosuke Gosho).

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—"Laurel and Hardy." Nov. 25-26 at 2: "The Bohemian Girl" (1936, James Horne and Charles R. Rogers) and "Brats" (1930, James Parrott). ♦ Nov. 26-27 at 2: "Talkie Shorts," program one (1932-33). ♦ Nov. 27 at 4: "Silent Shorts," program three (1927-29). ♦ "Repertory Nights." Nov. 25 at 7:30 and Nov. 25-26 at 6:30: "The Conformist" (1970, Bernardo Bertolucci; in Italian). ♦ "Black Light: Films from the African Diaspora." Nov. 29 at 7:30: "The Constant Gardener" (2005, Fernando Meirelles), followed by a discussion with the director.

PIONEER CINEMA

155 E. 3rd St. (212-254-3300)—In revival. Nov. 25 at 7:15: "Where Is the Friend's Home?" (1987, Abbas Kiarostami; in Farsi). ♦ Nov. 26 at 7: "And Life Goes On" (1991, Kiarostami; in Farsi).

SUNSHINE CINEMA

143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182)—"Sunshine@Midnight." Nov. 23-26: "The Warriors" (1979, Walter Hill).

THALIA THEATRE

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—"Just Kidding!" Nov. 26 at 11 A.M. and 2: "Blizzard" (2003, LeVar Burton). ♦ "Thalia Film Classics." Nov. 27 at 7 and Nov. 29 at 6: "Pulp Fiction" (1994, Quentin Tarantino).

WALTER READE THEATRE

Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—"A Luminous Century: Celebrating Norwegian Cinema." All films are in Norwegian. Nov. 23 at 1:30: "Liv" (1967, Pål Løkkeberg). ♦ Nov. 23 at 3:15 and 9:15 and Nov. 27 at 1: "Wives" (1975, Anja Breien). ♦ Nov. 23 at 5: "The Hunt" (1959, Erik Løchen). ♦ Nov. 23 at 7,

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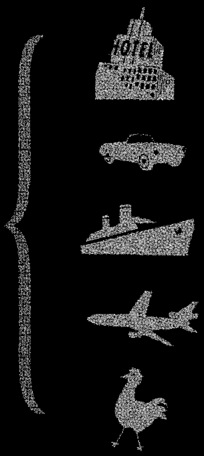

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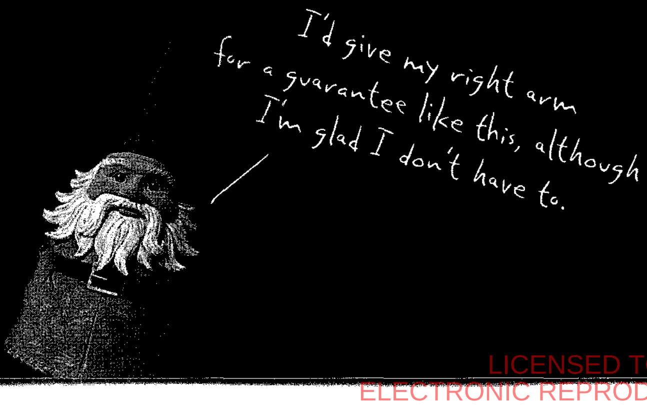
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Nov. 25 at 4:45, and Nov. 27 at 6:30: "The Betrayal/Kamilla" (1981, Vibeke Løkkeberg). ♦ Nov. 25 at 1 and 7 and Nov. 29 at 4: "Orion's Belt" (1984, Ola Solum). ♦ Nov. 25 at 3 and 9 and Nov. 29 at 6:15: "The Ice Palace" (1987, Per Blom). ♦ Nov. 27 at 2:45: "Kon-Tiki" (1950, Olle Nordemar). ♦ Nov. 27 at 4:30 and 8:40 and Nov. 29 at 2: "Uno" (2004, Aksel Hennie). ♦ Nov. 28 at 1 and 6:10: "Just Bea" (2004, Petter Næss). ♦ Nov. 28 at 2:45 and 8: "My Jealous Barber" (2004, Annette Sjursen). ♦ Nov. 28 at 4:20 and 9:35: "Pathfinder" (1987, Niels Gaup). ♦ "Les Paroisses Acadiennes: A Day in Les Blank's Louisiana," films by Les Blank. Nov. 26 at 1:30 and 8:30: "Spend It All" (1972), "Always for Pleasure" (1978), and "Yum Yum Yum! A Taste of Cajun and Creole Cooking" (1990). ♦ Nov. 26 at 4: "Dry Wood" and "Hot Pepper" (1973). ♦ Nov. 26 at 6: "J'ai Été au Bal" (1989) and "Marc and Ann" (1991). ♦ At Alice Tully Hall: "An Evening with Woody Allen." Nov. 28 at 7: The U.S. première of "Match Point" (2005, Woody Allen), preceded by a conversation between the director and Wendy Keys, of the Film Society of Lincoln Center (for information, call 212-875-5050).

READINGS AND TALKS

ISTVAN BANYAI

The *New Yorker* illustrator discusses his latest book, "The Other Side," an exploration of the nature of perspective. (Barnes & Noble, Sixth Ave. at 21st St. No tickets necessary. Nov. 28 at 7.)

K.G.B. BAR

The poets James Cummins and David Lehman read from their work. (85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary. Nov. 28 at 7:30.)

"THEATRE OF IDEAS"

The cookbook authors and food writers Ruth Reichl, John Willoughby, Rick Bayless, and Paula Deen consider the state of contemporary American cooking. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 212-854-7799. Nov. 28 at 8.)

ALBERT KOSTENEVICH

The Hermitage curator discusses the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist collections of Sergei Shchukin and Ivan Morozov, two of Moscow's leading collectors in the early twentieth century. (Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. 212-423-3500. Nov. 29 at 6:30.)

"LINCOLN'S MELANCHOLY"

The former First Lady Rosalynn Carter and Joshua Wolf Shenk, the author of "Lincoln's Melancholy: How Depression Challenged a President and Fueled His Greatness," talk about the private life of the sixteenth President. (South Court Auditorium, New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 212-868-4444. Nov. 29 at 7.)

FERNANDO MEIRELLES

The Brazilian director ("City of God") talks about his work, following a screening of his most recent film, "The Constant Gardener." (Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria, Queens. 718-784-0077. Nov. 29 at 7:30.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

HOLIDAY INFLATION

Santa Claus makes his customary appearance at the tail end of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade, which fills Central Park West and Broadway with marching bands, cheerleaders, and the signature balloons. This year, the helium-filled delights include Scooby-Doo, Charlie Brown, Chicken Little, and the artist Tom Otterness's rendition of Humpty Dumpty. The parade runs rain or shine on Nov. 24 from 77th St. to Herald Square, starting at 9 A.M. Those who can't wait to see the balloons can get a behind-the-scenes look the night before on the Upper West Side, where they will be filled with helium. (For more information about the parade, call 212-494-4495. To view the balloons in advance, go to 79th St. at Columbus Ave. between 3 and 10 on the 23rd.)

"WALK OFF THE TURKEY"

Shorewalkers, a nonprofit advocacy group dedicated to step-by-step explorations of the city's littoral zone, presents the opportunity to undo some of the caloric damage that Thanksgiving can inflict, with an eleven-mile hike along the Hudson, from South Ferry to the Little Red Lighthouse, beneath the George Washington Bridge. (Nov. 26, starting at 9 A.M. For more information, call 212-330-7686.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

A small, ormolu-mounted porcelain elephant—its lifelike skin articulated with striking craftsmanship, its body listing forward in anticipation of its next step—is one of the highlights of **Christie's** next House Sale, on Nov. 29-30. Typically, the monthly sale makes for an eclectic collection, a delightful mishmash of paintings, objets d'art, and furniture from different time periods and in varied styles, and this one is no different. Other offerings include a two-hundred-year-old Dutch linen press, fashioned from elm and bronze gilt, and a Renaissance-revival breakfront bookcase, carved from oak. The French paintings on hand range from eighteenth-century to Impressionist; there is even a Pissarro, albeit by the lesser-known Claude Pissarro, grandson of Camille. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.)

ON THE HORIZON

MOVIES
MCGUFFINS GALORE

Dec. 9-Jan. 12

The Film Forum's year-end series of screenings of 35-mm. prints of all of Alfred Hitchcock's classics is the gift that keeps on giving—all told, the program lasts more than a month. Highlights include a Christmas Day showing of the 1956 remake of "The Man Who Knew Too Much," which features James Stewart, international intrigue, a mysterious taxidermist, and Doris Day singing "Que Sera, Sera." (212-727-8110.)

READINGS AND TALKS
BLACKBOARD BUNGLE

Dec. 15

Frank McCourt recently completed the trilogy of memoirs that began with "Angela's Ashes" and "'Tis." The final entry, "Teacher Man," details the often hilarious misadventures he had during the thirty years he spent in the New York public-school system. He reads from it at the 92nd Street Y. (212-415-5500.)

NIGHT LIFE
HOME TRUTHS

Jan. 3-Feb. 4

The Broadway luminary Elaine Stritch lives at the Carlyle Hotel. Her first solo cabaret engagement, an autobiographical program called "At Home at the Carlyle," was such a hit this fall that she's back with more stories and songs. (212-744-1600.)

ART
ART ROCK

Jan. 10-April 1

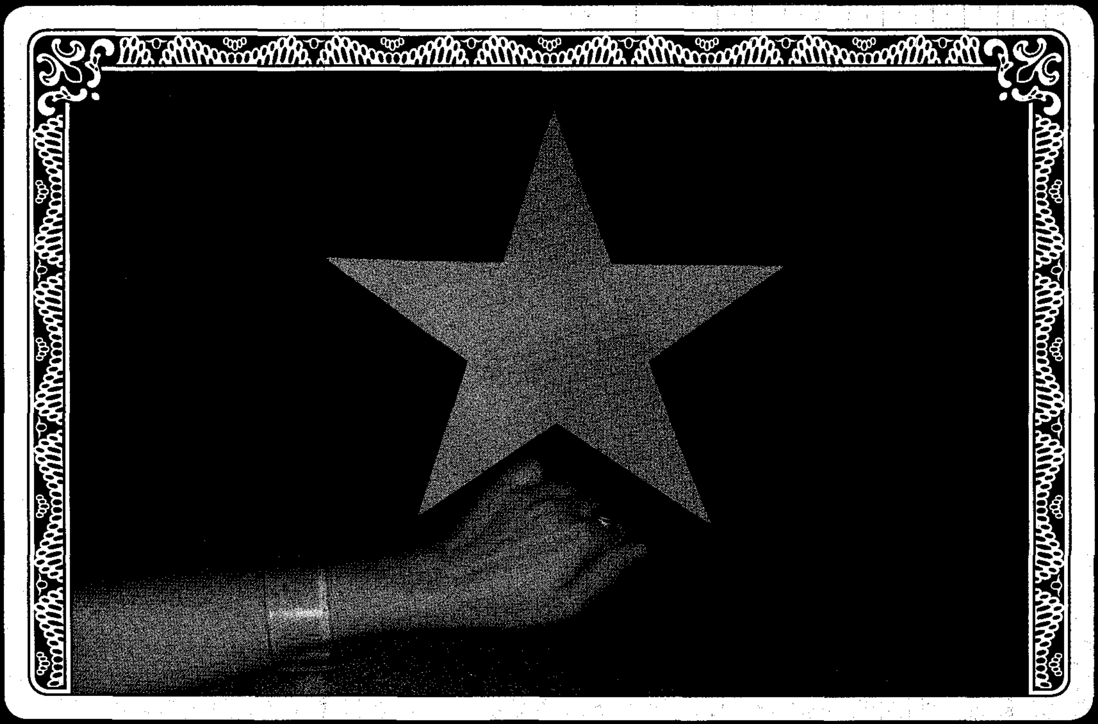
The work of some hundred and seventy-five writers, artists, filmmakers, musicians, dancers, and performers will be included in "The Downtown Show: The New York Art Scene, 1974-1984." The organized chaos will attempt to summarize an era in which the talents of Nan Goldin, Karen Finley, Philip Glass, Robert Longo, Kathy Acker, Eric Bogosian, and many others blossomed. (N.Y.U.'s Grey Art Gallery. 212-998-6780.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
MAGIC SHOW

Jan. 21-Feb. 3

The Julie Taymor production of Mozart's "Magic Flute," which was the smash hit of the Metropolitan Opera's 2004-05 season, returns for a run of five performances that feature the baritone Nathan Gunn; conducted by Paul Daniel. (212-362-6000.)

ERIK T. JOHNSON



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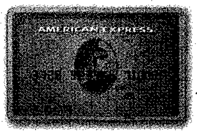

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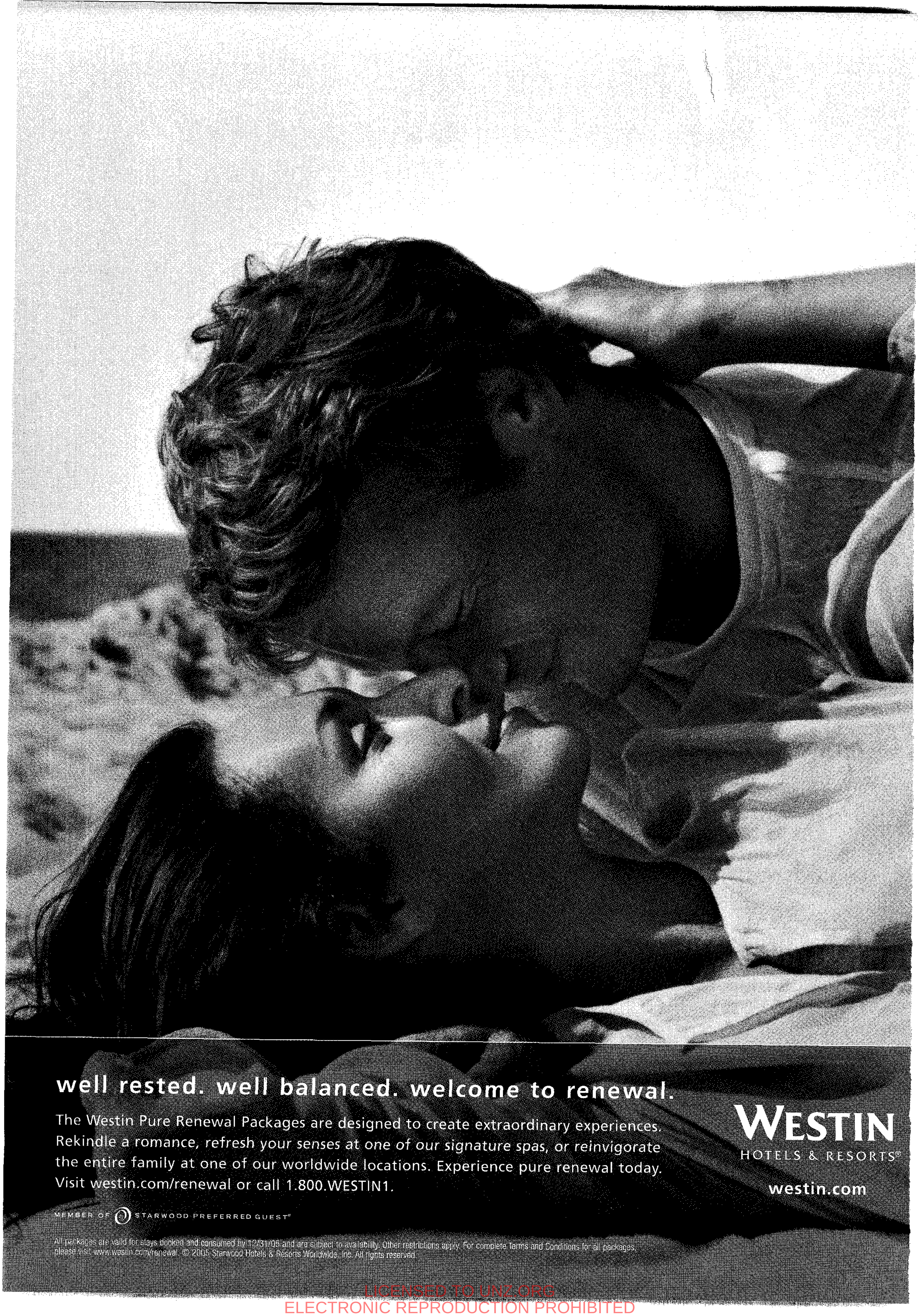

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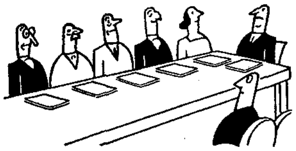
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT

MISSIONS

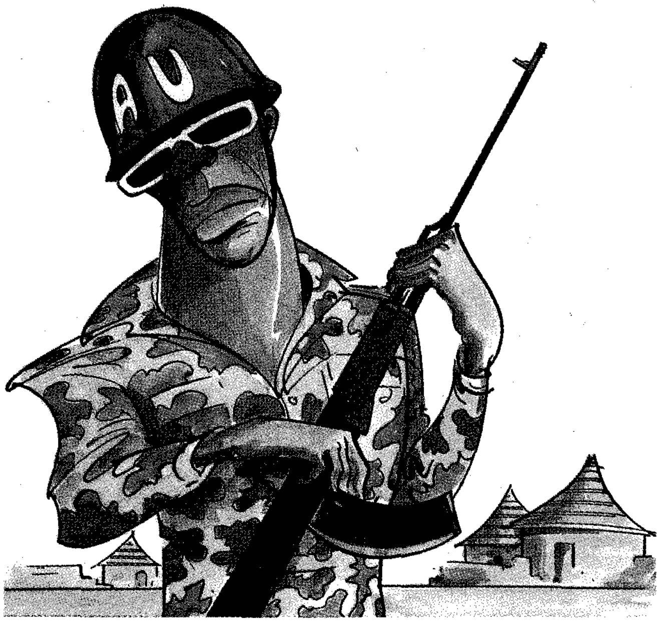


For the past two and a half years, the Arab-dominated government of Sudan has teamed up with sword-wielding marauders on horses and camels, known as *janjaweed*, to butcher, rape, and expel non-Arabs living in the western region of Darfur. In May of 2004, the United States, Europe, and Africa settled on an imperfect solution for stabilizing the region: send in the African Union. The A.U. accordingly dispatched sixty unarmed observers and three hundred "green helmet" soldiers to monitor a ceasefire between the government and the non-Arab rebels who were fighting it.

What followed was a textbook example of "mission creep." The ceasefire collapsed, the Sudanese Air Force and the *janjaweed* continued their deadly raids, thousands more non-Arabs were killed, and the rebels began to splinter into rivalrous groups. In response, in October of 2004, the A.U. sent in an additional three thousand observers and soldiers. When that didn't stem the violence, it sent more troops. By this month, more than two hundred thousand people had died and two million had been displaced, and the operation had come to include almost seven thousand people: some forty international staff; seven hundred military observers; twelve hundred civilian police; and nearly five thousand soldiers, mainly from Nigeria and Rwanda.

Initially, the African Union, the Western powers, the government of Sudan, and the United Nations all seemed to benefit from the arrangement. The A.U., which had been launched in 2002 to provide "African solutions to African problems," capitalized on the West's guilt over the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, and received nearly half a billion dollars for the Darfur mission. (Thabo Mbeki, South Africa's President, later said, with typical bravado, that Darfur is "an African responsibility, and we can do it.") The Western powers could claim that something noble was being done in Sudan without having to risk their own troops. The U.S., in particular, could appease noisy Darfur advocates at home—students, Christian activists, members of Congress—while forging closer counter-terrorism ties with Sudan. And the U.N., which is struggling to manage sixteen peacekeeping operations around the world, could avoid being handed yet another doomed mission.

The presence of A.U. forces undoubtedly made Darfur more stable. But that is no more consoling than Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's claims that America treats its detainees better than Saddam Hussein treated his. Darfur remains overrun with violence and banditry. On October 8th, four Nigerian A.U. soldiers and two contractors were killed by the *janjaweed*. The next day, eighteen A.U. peacekeepers were kidnapped by rebels, and, when a rescue mission of twenty A.U. soldiers was dispatched, it, too, was abducted—by a rival rebel faction. (They were all later re-



ILLUSTRATIONS BY GERALD SCARFE

leased.) Just before Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick made his fourth trip to Darfur, earlier this month, fifteen hundred men allegedly torched six villages. West Darfur is so dangerous that the U.N. has withdrawn its nonessential staff. António Guterres, the U.N.'s High Commissioner for Refugees, has warned of "a very serious degeneration" in Darfur, saying, "People are dying, and dying in large numbers."

The A.U. mission is clearly overwhelmed. Its teams, spread out across an area the size of France, manage at most three patrols per day in various sectors of the region, and African countries are hardly eager to send more soldiers. In a literal rendition of "death by a thousand paper cuts," Khartoum has blocked the delivery of a hundred and five Canadian armored vehicles to vulnerable A.U. troops; grounded the A.U.'s helicopters by imposing arbitrary flight restrictions; and delayed visas for NATO officials meant to train A.U. troops. When the A.U. patrols encounter skirmishes, they are under instructions to inform the organization's headquarters, in Addis Ababa, but responsibility for the protection of citizens has been explicitly left to the government of Sudan.

Soon, this stopgap mission will fail not only those in need of protection but all the other interested parties as well. The Western powers have already spent more than a billion dollars feeding refugees in camps that feel increasingly permanent, and it is nearly inevitable that, as in the West Bank and Pakistan, some Muslims in these camps will be radicalized, and take up arms locally, or, perhaps, farther afield. And once the U.S. and Europe follow through on their recent decisions to slash funding for the African Union, the U.N. will be forced to assume peacekeeping duties in Darfur after all. "The A.U. is looking for a peg to hang success on so it can walk away gracefully," one U.N. official told me.

That peg may be hard to find. The peace talks between Khartoum and an ever increasing number of rebel groups, which began last year and are now entering their seventh round, have become a farce. The prospects for stability are so dim that diplomats have begun trotting out alibis from past ethnic conflicts. "It's a tribal war," Zoellick said in Khartoum, on November 9th. "And, frankly, I don't think foreign forces ought to get themselves in the middle of a tribal war." But, if a humanitarian calamity is going to be averted, "foreign forces" will be required. Darfur's displaced have gathered in some three hundred sites, and someone needs to protect them from the *janjaweed* who prowl nearby. Roads must be made safe for humanitarian relief convoys. In the longer term, a political deal must be struck between the region's warring factions, and the majority of Darfur's displaced must feel safe enough to return home.

These are monumental tasks that the African Union alone cannot perform. Roméo Dallaire, the U.N.'s commander during the Rwanda genocide, has said that a multinational force of up to forty-four thousand troops is needed. Other experts have said that twenty-five thousand armed troops, with a mandate to protect civilians, would vastly improve the situation. If planning starts now, within six months or so the A.U. mission could be absorbed into a far larger multinational U.N. force that could appeal for troops from such peacekeeping veterans as Canada, the Netherlands, Turkey, and Jordan.

Persuading these countries to send their troops to Darfur won't be easy. Nor will obtaining permission from Sudan, which, in a ghastly coincidence of timing, takes over the A.U.'s rotating presidency in January. But the alternative is a far bigger African problem—with no African, or international, solution.

—*Samantha Power*

MEN OF LETTERS
BAUDRILLARD ON TOUR

There may never again be a year in Jean Baudrillard's life quite like 1999. Baudrillard, the French philosopher, is best known for his theory that consumer society forms a kind of code that gives individuals the illusion of choice while in fact entrapping them in a vast web of simulated reality. In 1999, the movie "The Matrix," which was based on this theory, transformed him from a cult figure into an extremely famous cult figure. But Baudrillard was ambivalent about the film—he declined an invitation to participate in the writing of its sequels—and these days he is still going about his usual French-philosopher business, scandalizing audiences with the grandiloquent sweep of his gnomic pronouncements and his post-Marxian pessimism.

Earlier this month, he gave a reading at the Tilton Gallery, on East Seventy-sixth Street, in order to promote "The Conspiracy of Art," his new book. The audience was too big for the room—some people had to stand. A tall, Nico-esque blond woman in a shiny white raincoat leaned against the mantelpiece, next to a tall man with chest-length dreadlocks. A middle-aged woman with red-and-purple hair sat nearby. There was a brief opening act: Arto Lindsay, the onetime Lounge Lizard, whose broad forehead, seventies-style eyeglasses, and sturdy teeth seemed precariously supported by his reedy frame, played a thunderous cadenza on a pale-blue electric guitar.

Baudrillard opened his book and began to read in a careful tone. He is a small man with large facial features. He wore a brown jacket and a blue shirt. (Some years ago, he appeared on the stage of Whiskey Pete's, near Las Vegas, wearing a gold lamé suit with mirrored lapels, and read a poem, "Motel-Suicide," which he wrote in the nineteen-eighties. But there was no trace of the lamé Baudrillard at the Tilton Gallery.)

" 'The illusion of desire has been lost in the ambient pornography and contemporary art has lost the desire of illusion,' " he began. " 'After the orgies and the liberation of all desires, we have moved into the transsexual, the transparency of sex, with signs and images erasing all its secrets and ambiguity.' "

After he read, Baudrillard expanded on his theme. "We say that Disneyland is not, of course, the sanctuary of the imagination, but Disneyland as hyperreal world masks the fact that all America is hyperreal, all America is Disney-

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land," he said. "And the same for art. The art scene is but a scene, or obscene"—he paused for chuckles from the audience—"mask for the reality that all the world is trans-aestheticized. We have no more to do with art as such, as an exceptional form. Now the banal reality has become aestheticized, all reality is trans-aestheticized, and that is the very problem. Art was a form, and then it became more and more no more a form but a value, an aesthetic value, and so we come from art to aesthetics—it's something very, very different. And as art becomes aesthetics it joins with reality, it joins with the banality of reality. Because all reality becomes aesthetical, too, then it's a total confusion between art and reality, and the result of this confusion is hyperreality. But, in this sense, there is no more radical difference between art and realism. And this is the very end of art. As form."

Sylvère Lotringer, Baudrillard's longtime publisher, who was there to interview him, added, "Yes, this is what I was saying when I was quoting Roland Barthes saying that in America sex is everywhere except in sex, and I was adding that art is everywhere but also in art."

"Even in art," Baudrillard corrected.

"Even in art, yes. The privilege of art in itself as art in itself has disappeared, so art is not what it thinks it is."

Many people in the room wished to ask Baudrillard a question. A gray-haired man wearing a denim cap and a green work shirt, an acolyte of the philosopher Bernard Stiegler, wanted to know whether, even if art was no longer art, as such, it might not still function as useful therapy for the wounded narcissism of artists. A middle-aged man in the second row who had been snapping photographs of Baudrillard with a tiny camera raised his hand.

"I don't know how to ask this question, because it's so multifaceted," he said. "You're Baudrillard, and you were able to fill a room. And what I want to know is: when someone dies, we read an obituary—like Derrida died last year, and is a great loss for all of us. What would you like to be said about you? In other words, who are you? I would like to know how old you are, if you're married and if you have kids, and since you've spent a great deal of time writing a great many books, some of which I could not get through, is there something you want to say that can be summed up?"

"What I am, I don't know," Baudrillard said, with a Gallic twinkle in his eye. "I am the simulacrum of myself."

The audience giggled.

"And how old are you?" the questioner persisted.

"Very young."

—*Larissa MacFarquhar*

DISPLACEMENT DEPT. NORTH

David Crier was doubtless flouting the spirit, if not the letter, of United Airlines' carry-on-bag regulations when he boarded Flight 1403 out of New Orleans one day in mid-October. Crier is a stolid, businesslike gentleman of sixty-six, with the stony expression and rumbling voice of one of those tough inner-city high-school principals who show up in Disney movies. Shortly before the jet's door closed, he came huffing up the aisle under the weight of two enormous satchels; one he barely squeezed into an overhead bin, and the other, once he sat down, left little room for his legs. It wasn't only the size of the satchels that attracted notice; it was their smell.

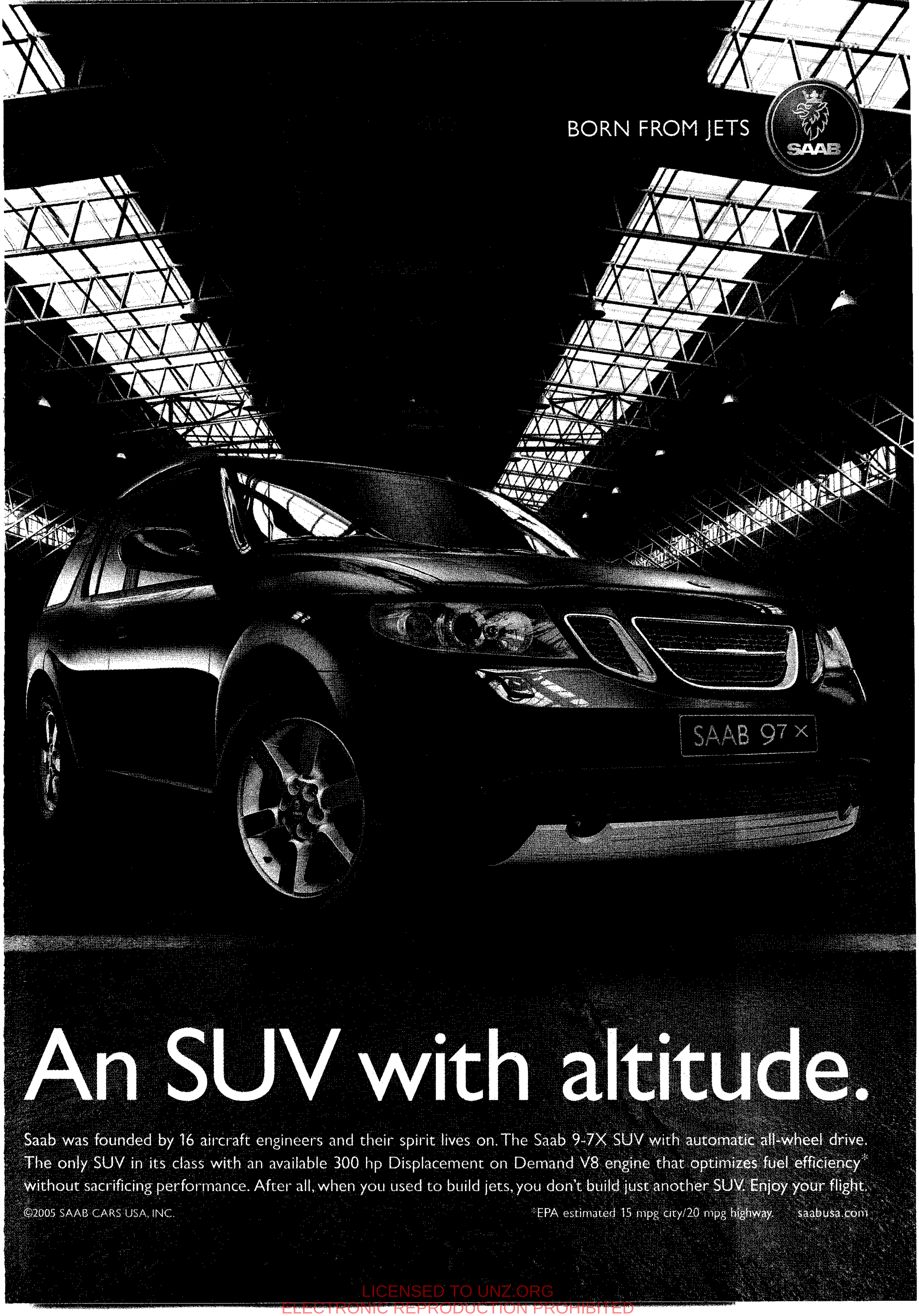
"What I got in here is my seasoning meat—some ham hocks and some smoked pig tails," he said, patting the case between his knees. Although Crier was dressed in a conservative suit, he had carefully manicured fingernails that were half an inch long. "And I got me some red beans, because you can't use just any kind of kidney beans; a slab of ribs; some Tony Chachere's Creole seasoning; and a few other things." The entire front of the plane was starting to smell like a barbecue. "I don't know when I'll be back," Crier said matter-of-factly. "I got to make sure I can eat."

Before Hurricane Katrina, Crier sold cars at the Rimrock Chrysler dealership, on Canal Street. He knew that the dealership's owners were from out of town, but he had never focussed on exactly where, until, after the storm, they offered him a job at the home office. So, after a lifetime in torpid New Orleans, he was on his way to his first real winter, in Billings, Montana, where, if the 2000 census is still accurate, he would be the two-thousand-six-hundred-and-ninety-third African-American in the state. "I imagine this will be something of an experience," he said.

One brisk day a few weeks after arriving, Crier was pacing the showroom at his new job. Most of the other salesmen wore golf shirts with the company logo on the breast, but Crier had on a green suit and a crisp white shirt, with a yellow necktie and matching pocket handkerchief. A jewelled Shriner pin adorned his lapel. His fingernails had been worn down to cracked nubs. "It's the cold and the dryness here," he said, rubbing his hands. When a visitor invited him to lunch and asked whether he knew a good place, he thought for a moment and said no.

The past weeks have been harder than Crier expected. He earns minimum wage—five dollars and fifteen cents an hour—and is expected to make his real money from commissions. Chrysler had a big sale during the summer, he says, and everybody who wanted a new car probably bought one then. It's also taking him time to learn the nuances of the Montana market. "I'm starting to recognize the license plates from the Indian reservations, and they don't have the best credit," he said. "Also, in New Orleans we had a rotation, so that a customer who came on the lot went to the next salesman in line. Here the young guys run out to be first when someone shows up, and I'm too old to race them."

At the Old Country Buffet, near the dealership, Crier lined up for meat loaf, corn, and salad, and slid into a booth. He used to run a restaurant near the Tulane University campus, and at charity events he has cooked alongside the legendary New Orleans chef and fellow-Shriner Buster Holmes. He sighed and picked up his fork. Everybody in Billings has been very nice, he said. "I went into an outdoor store for long johns and winter clothes, and when I said I was from New Orleans the whole store gathered round me to help." Rocky Mountain College gave him and another refugee a free dormitory room to share, which he appreciates, but he says that his roommate's snoring is becoming tedious. As are his days off. "You go home and play with those two channels on the TV set," he said. "You can't go to the bars, because you'll run out of the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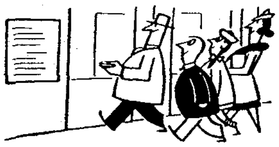
no-money you're making." He was looking forward to Sunday, when he would sit at a local sports bar and watch the Saints play the Bears.

After lunch, Crier headed off to tangle with a landlord who had an apartment to rent but was insisting on a six-month lease. "I don't know that I'll make it that long if I'm not making any money," Crier said. He'd like to return to New Orleans to fix his house, which had its roof blown open. His wife, who evacuated to Houston before the storm, would like him to join her there. But, as a man of retirement age who doesn't have much saved for retirement, he said he may have to tough it out in Billings. He was looking forward to the prospect of a proper kitchen. "There's a little fridge and hot plate in the dorm room, but they don't want us cooking there," he said. So where has he stowed his smoked pig tails, hocks, and ribs? "They're in the freezer," Crier said, buttoning his coat tightly. "Like me."

—*Dan Baum*

THE BOARDS

BLOODY ENOUGH



On the eve of previews of the Roundabout's production of Eugene O'Neill's "A Touch of the Poet," Gabriel Byrne, who plays the father in a volatile Irish-immigrant family, sat in front of a mirror in the theatre's basement. A makeup artist was trying out an array of techniques on him, designed to make him look battered and bruised.

"Watch the blood, Angelina," Byrne said softly. He spoke in his natural brogue. (It would occasionally be expanded onstage.) He looked grim. "It should come down in a dribble, not gushing too much," he said, running a finger down his face from a fake head wound to his chin. "Whenever there's blood, I think of Peter O'Toole, when he did his famous production of the Scottish play in London, in 1980. We never speak the name of the Scottish play in a theatre, or else, to escape the bad luck, we have to turn around three times and spit."

"Are you talking about 'Macb—'?" somebody began.

Byrne got up from the makeup chair, his face splotchy with blood and grime, turned clockwise three times, and spat. Then he sat down and said, "O'Toole's Scottish play was savaged by the critics, because he covered it with so much blood. Everyone was dripping with blood. The audience thought it was funny and laughed." He paused. "I'm wary of too much blood, Angelina."

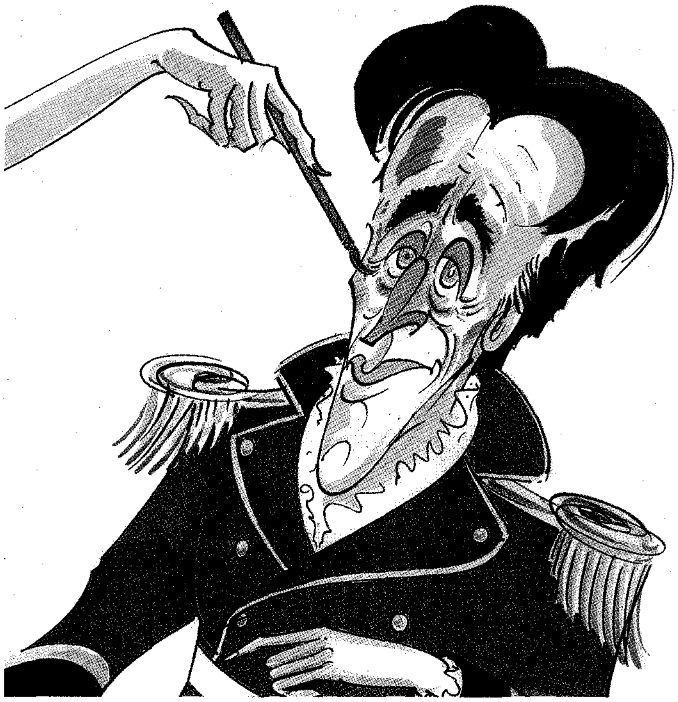
He finger-combed the oozing red stuff on the side of his face and then, with a pinkie, lifted one corner of his top lip. "In there," he said. "A bit of the blood in there, and a dark thing over the teeth. Where the dirty-doing cops hit me."

"We should get mouth blood for there," Angelina said. "The other is heavy blood."

Doug Hughes, the play's cheerful director, came into the room. Byrne turned his head to show him the wounds.

Hughes seemed unimpressed. "You look insufficiently humiliated," he said. "You need to show the *hu-mil-i-a-tion* of what the cops did to you."

Angelina patted on some white Pan-Cake, and Hughes bounced off.



Gabriel Byrne

Byrne turned his attention back to the blood. "We don't want this blood in competition with the later blood, when he comes back after the terrible killing near the end," he said. "That's when he walks in completely bloody, as if he's dying."

"That will need the heavy blood," Angelina said.

Emily Bergl, a young woman with strawberry-blond hair who plays Byrne's daughter, came into the room smiling. She was holding a magazine opened to the horoscope page.

"What's your sign?" she asked Byrne.

"Taurus," he said.

"Good," she said, and read aloud, " 'You will experience a big success at the end of this month.' How do you like that? Just before the play opens," she added, and left.

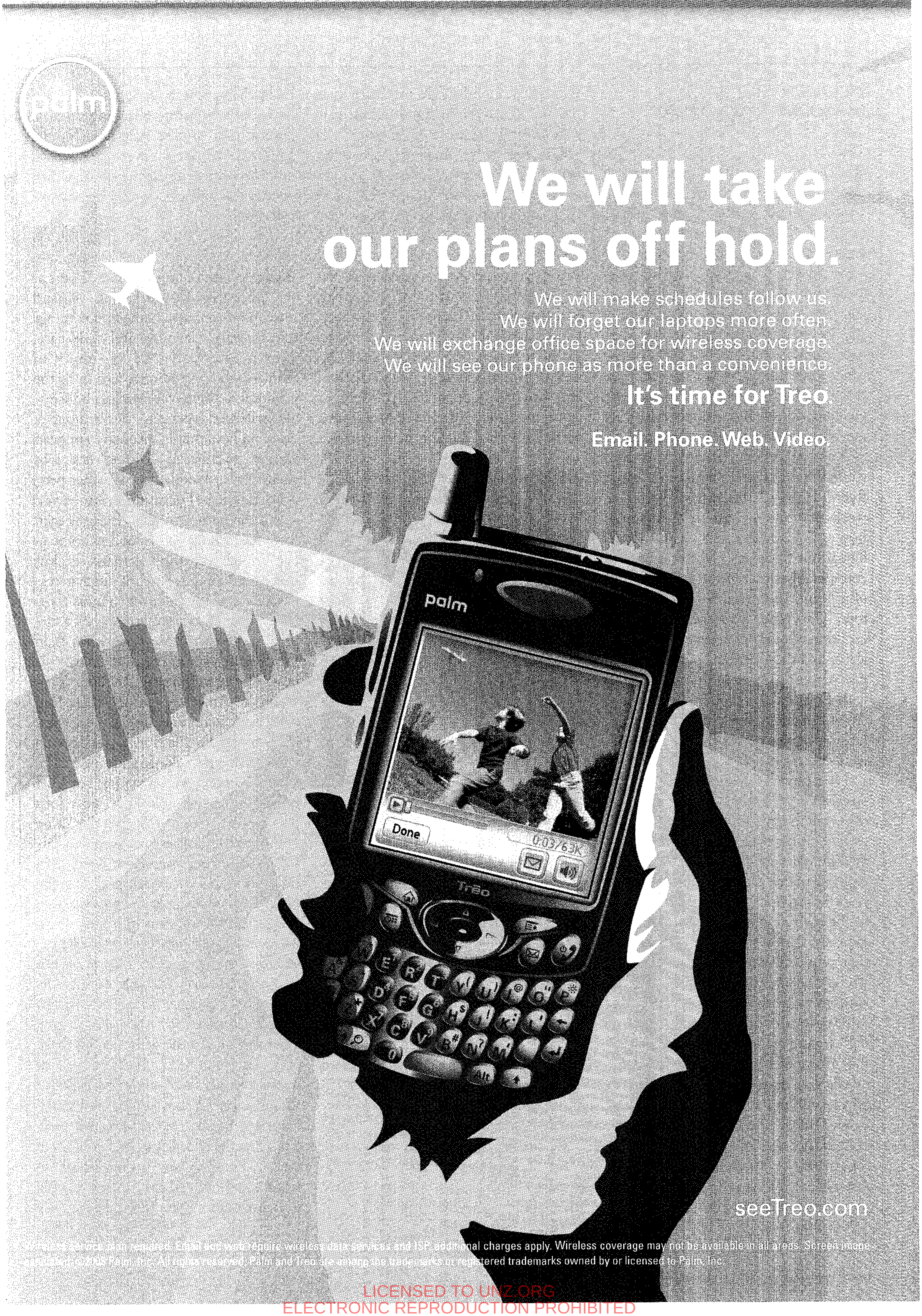
"I'm supposed to get furious with her in the play," Byrne said. "Because I can't tame her—I can't take the spirit out of her. And she's sleeping with a guy in *my* house. What father wants to have his daughter sleeping with a guy in his house?" He sagged. "I can identify with the language of the play; it can be like barbed wire. O'Neill wanted to be a poet. He had an innate sense of rhythm. Someone once said of the Irish, 'They know how not to use one word if seven will do.' "

Angelina dabbed a bit of blood under his lip, and he made as if to taste it.

"I'm not like O'Neill," he went on. "He was brutal with his daughter, Oona. When she married Charlie Chaplin, O'Neill never spoke to her again. Can you imagine what kind of father could do that? My family is nothing like my character's family. I'm the eldest of six. One brother is a fireman, the other a journalist in Dublin. We're all very close."

Byrne looked at his watch. "Oh, I'm late," he said. "I've got to pick up my thirteen-year-old daughter, Romy, for a magic show. What a girl! She's interested in magic. She said to me, 'I want to learn how to make almost everybody I know disappear.' " Byrne gave a long laugh. At last.

—*Lillian Ross*



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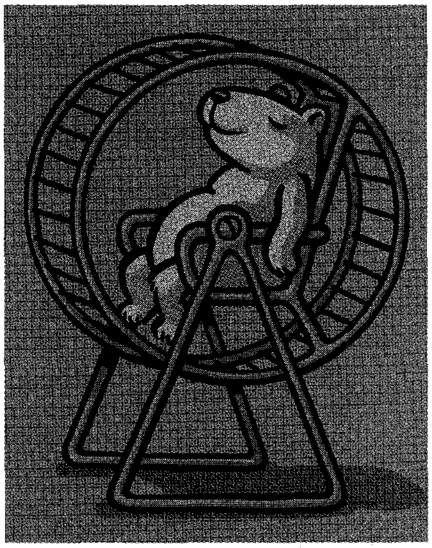
THE FINANCIAL PAGE
NO WORK AND NO PLAY

In the nineteen-fifties and sixties, it was a commonplace that Americans would soon devote their lives to leisure, not work. The number of hours the average American worked had fallen by almost twenty-five per cent between 1900 and 1950, and pundits saw no reason for the trend to stop. By the end of the twentieth century, the futurist Herman Kahn prophesied in 1967, Americans would enjoy thirteen weeks of vacation and a four-day work week. The challenge, it seemed, would be figuring out what to do with all our free time.

Kahn was wrong. Today, Americans work about as many hours each year as they did in 1970, and, instead of thirteen weeks of vacation, the average American now gets four (and that includes holidays). But there is a place that has got considerably closer to the leisure society of the futurists' dreams—Western Europe. The French work twenty-eight per cent fewer hours per person than Americans, and the Germans put in twenty-five per cent fewer hours. Compared with Europeans, a higher percentage of American adults work, they work more hours per week, and they work more weeks per year.

One obvious result of this is that America is richer than Europe. In terms of productivity—that is, how much a worker produces in an hour—there's little difference between the U.S., France, and Germany. But since more people work in America, and since they work so many more hours, Americans create more wealth. In effect, Americans trade their productivity for more money, while Europeans trade it for more leisure. Folk wisdom suggests that the reason for this difference is cultural, which, depending on your perspective, means either that Europeans are ambitionless café-dwellers or that Americans are Puritan grinds with no taste for the finer things in life. But, while culture undoubtedly matters, not that long ago it was the Europeans who worked harder; in 1970, for instance, the French worked ten per cent more hours than Americans.

So what changed? The Nobel Prize-winning economist Edward C. Prescott has pointed to sharp increases in Europe's tax rates since 1970—higher taxes give workers less of an incentive to work extra hours. But taxes aren't high enough to explain Europeans' new taste for free time. A more plausible explanation was put forward recently by the economists Alberto Alesina, Edward Glaeser, and Bruce Sacerdote: European labor unions are far more powerful and European labor markets are far more tightly regulated than their American counterparts. In the seventies, Europe, like the U.S., was hit by high oil prices, high inflation, and slowing productivity. In response, labor unions fought for a reduced work week with no reduction in wages, and greater job protection. When it was hard to get wage increases, the unions pushed for more vacation time instead. Governments responded to political pressure by plumping for leisure, too; in France in the eighties, for instance, a succession of laws increased mandatory vacation time and limited employers' ability to use overtime.



CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

The difference in work habits between Europeans and Americans, in other words, isn't a matter of European workers' individually deciding they'd rather spend a few extra hours every week at the movies; it's a case of collectively determined contracts and regulations. There is a good deal to be said for this approach—most Americans, after all, are happy that the forty-hour week is written into law—but it has its costs. Even if you want to work more, it's hard to do so: try getting anything done in Paris during August. And reducing the amount of work employees do makes it more expensive to employ people, which contributes to Europe's high unemployment rate.

The embrace of leisure affects the job situation in Europe in other ways, too. Because Americans spend more hours at the office than Europeans, they spend fewer hours on tasks in the home: things like cooking, cleaning, and child care. This is especially true of American women, who, according to a study by the economists Richard Freeman and Ronald Schettkat, spend ten fewer hours a week on household jobs than European women do. Instead of doing these jobs themselves, Americans pay other people to do them. For instance, Americans spend about the same percentage of their income stocking up on food at home as the French and the Germans do, but they spend roughly twice as much in restaurants as the French, and almost three times as much as the Germans. Not surprisingly, many more Americans than Europeans work in the restaurant business. The same is true of child care.

In the American model, then, you work more hours and use the money you make to pay for the things you can't do because you're working, and this creates a demand for service jobs that wouldn't otherwise exist. In Europe, those jobs don't exist in anything like the same numbers; employment in services in Europe is fifteen per cent below what it is in the U.S. Service jobs are precisely the jobs that young people and women (two categories of Europeans who are severely underemployed) find it easiest to get, the jobs that immigrants here thrive on but that are often not available to immigrants in France. There are many explanations for the estimated forty-per-cent unemployment rate in the *banlieues* that have been the site of recent riots, but part of the problem is that voluntary leisure for some Europeans has helped lead to involuntary leisure for others. The less work that gets done, the less work there is to do. Helping some people get off the labor treadmill can keep many people from ever getting on the treadmill at all.

—*James Surowiecki*

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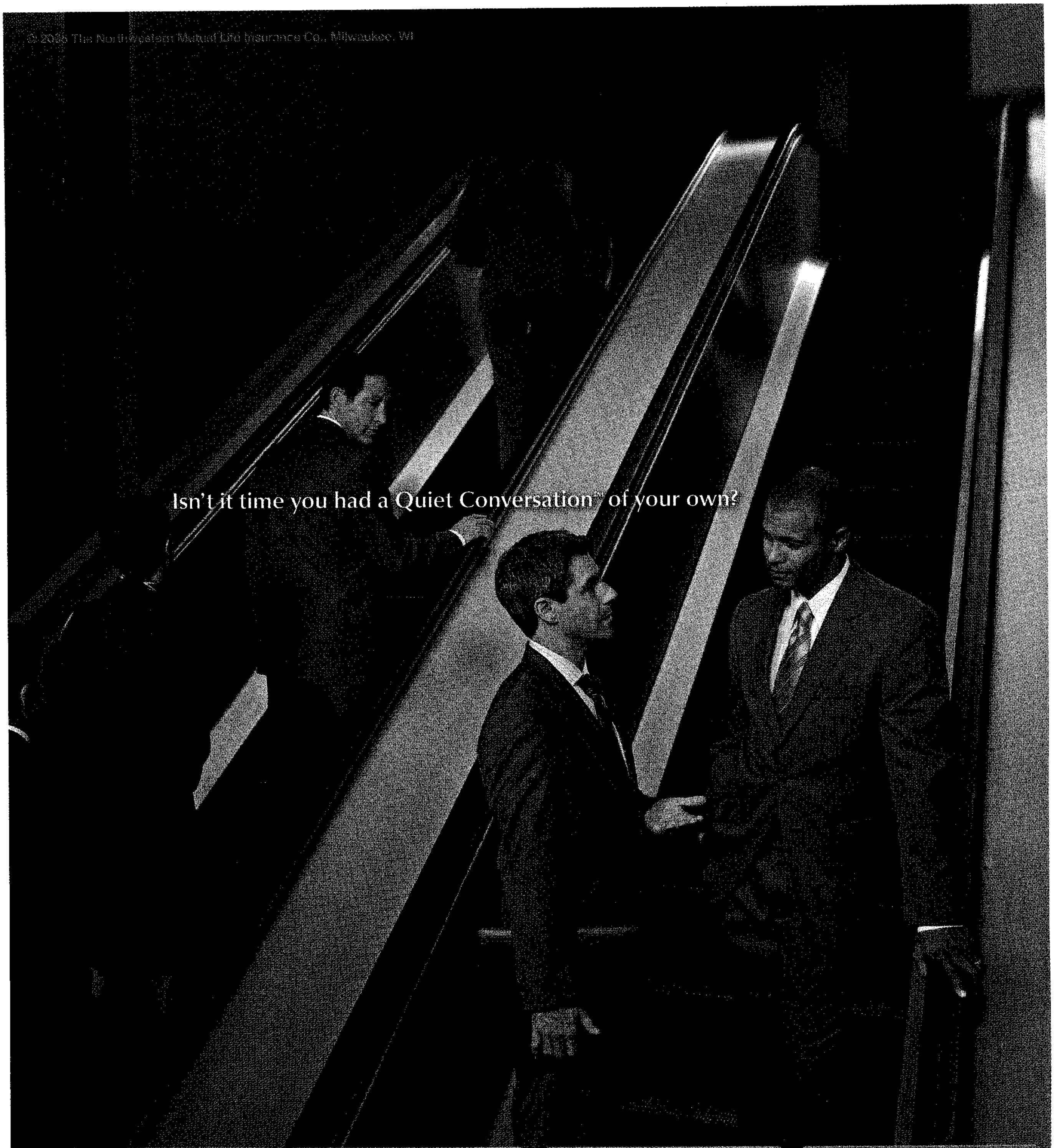
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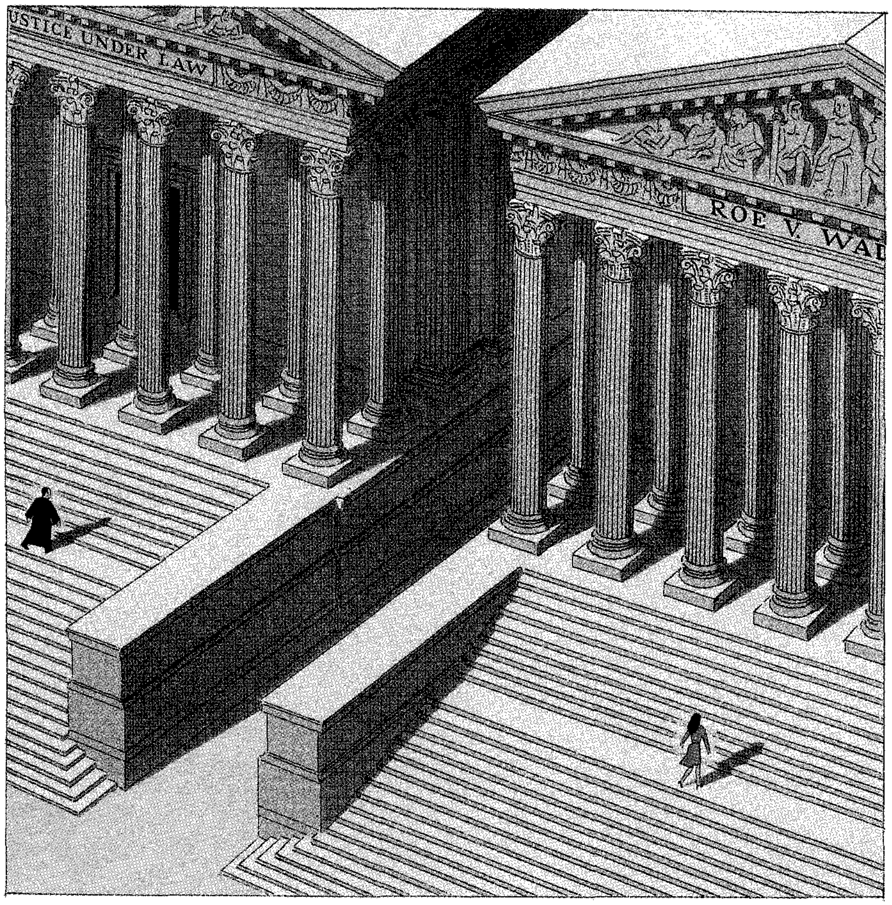
ANNALS OF LAW

STILL STANDING

The resilience of Roe v. Wade.

BY JEFFREY TOOBIN

The Supreme Court decided Roe v. Wade on January 22, 1973, the day that Lyndon B. Johnson died, and obituaries of the former President, who had left the White House only four years earlier, led the news the next morning. But in the subsequent three decades Roe has dominated public debate about the Court; only the Dred Scott case, which, in 1857, established that the Constitution regarded slaves as property, not as people, and helped precipitate the Civil War, and Brown v. Board of Education, which, in 1954, began the process of public-school integration, have had a comparable impact. Through eight Presidential elections and the nominations of thirteen Justices (some of which failed, at least in part, because of the nominees' views on Roe), no other controversies involving the Constitution—about such issues as civil rights or the relationship between church and state—have generated as much discussion as the holding, in Roe, that women have a right under the Constitution to terminate their pregnancies.



Since 1973, the Court has had many opportunities to overturn Roe.

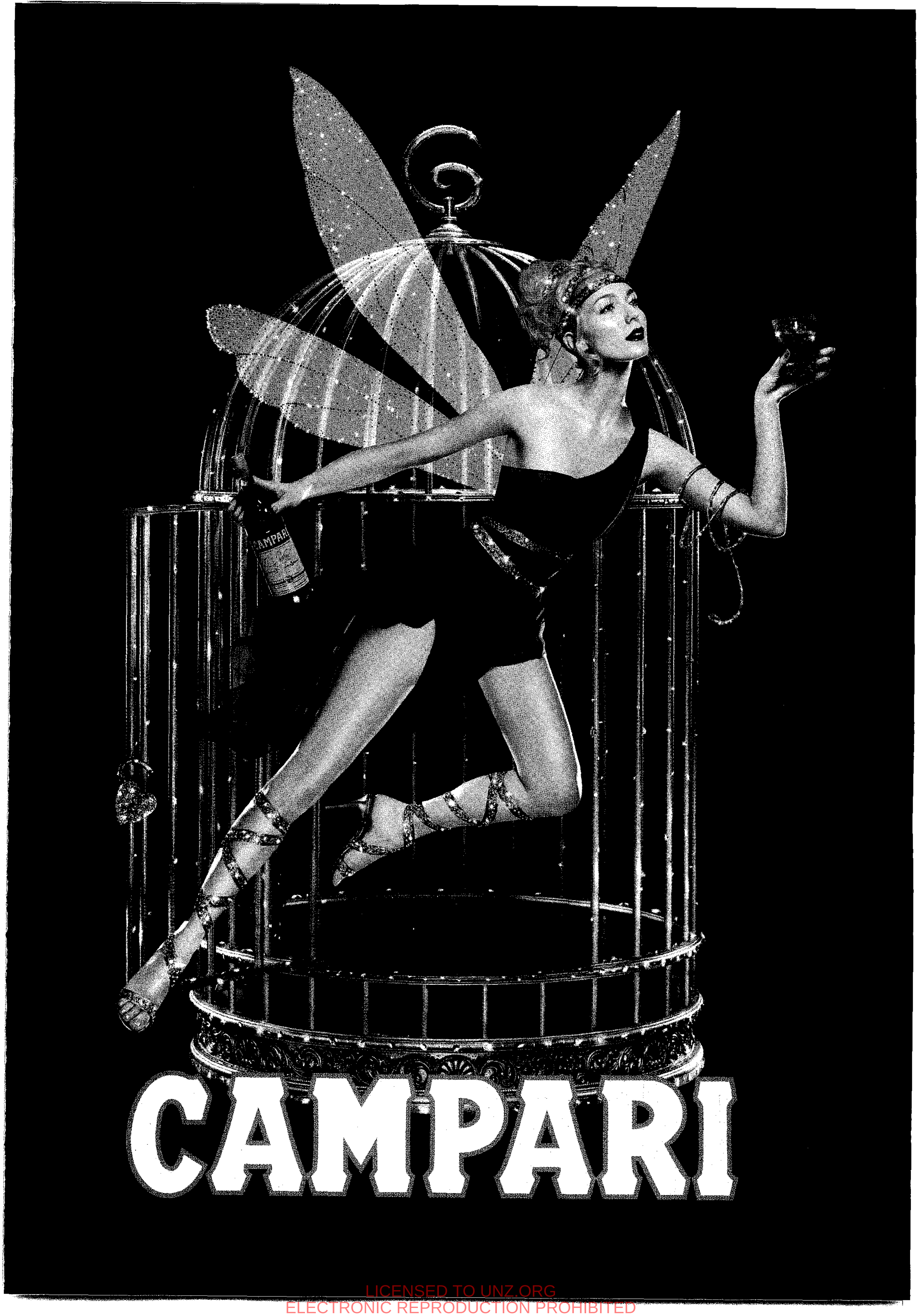
Of the three Republican Presidents since 1980, two have called for Roe's reversal—George W. Bush has said that he favors restrictions on abortion law but has stopped short of demanding that Roe be overturned—and opposition to the decision has been a central organizing principle of the religious right. Among liberals, support for Roe has often been grudging. Many proponents of legal abortion have criticized the reasoning behind the opinion, and some have asserted that their cause would have been better served by taking their fight to state legislatures rather than to the Supreme Court. Some Justices, Sandra Day O'Connor prominent among them, have argued that the medical science on which Roe rests is outmoded. "These Supreme Court nominations always come down to the same thing," Orrin Hatch, the Utah Republican and longtime member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, told me. "It's one case: Roe, Roe, Roe."

Interest in the case has recently become particularly intense. On November 30th, for the first time in five years, the Supreme Court will hear arguments in an abortion-rights case, a challenge to part of a New Hampshire law that requires minors seeking abortions to notify their parents. Then, on January 9th, the Judiciary Committee will begin hearings on the nomination of Samuel A. Alito, Jr., a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, to replace O'Connor, who is retiring from the Supreme Court after twenty-four years. O'Connor's central role in determining the abortion jurisprudence of the Court since Roe, and Alito's controversial record in abortion cases as an appeals-court judge, make this transition an especially momentous one. In a 1985 application for a promotion in President Reagan's Justice Department, Alito wrote that he was "particularly proud" to have participated in writing a brief to the Supreme Court arguing that "the Constitution does not protect a right to an abortion."

Yet Roe has withstood attacks remarkably well. Only four of the seventeen Justices who have served since 1973 have voted to overturn it, though the Court has had many opportunities to do so, and public-opinion polls show strong, if not overwhelming, support for the decision. Roe v. Wade may be a rickety landmark, but it has proved to be resilient.

The events leading up to Roe were haphazard. In the summer of 1969, a carnival worker named Norma McCorvey went to see a doctor in Dallas because she suspected that she was preg-

GUY BILLOUT


CAMPARI

SPLAYDS
Victoria Roberts

"Yes, I would love you more if you didn't make mobiles out of old cutlery and beads."

nant. She was twenty-two years old, and this was her third pregnancy, the product of a brief affair with a man whom she had met at a carnival. McCorvey had given up custody of her first two children and, distraught at the prospect of bearing a third child, decided that she wanted an abortion. Abortion was illegal in Texas, as it was in most states, except to save the life of the mother. As David J. Garrow recounts in his 1994 book "Liberty and Sexuality," "Another woman in the waiting room, upon hearing Norma's story, told her that she ought to tell the doctor that she had been raped, for that news might well make the difference." Thus misinformed, the doctor referred McCorvey to a local lawyer who knew a lawyer who was considering a challenge to Texas's abortion law. In March, 1970, McCorvey's lawyer filed a suit against the state, giving her client the pseudonym Jane Roe and naming as the defendant the district attorney of Dallas County, Henry Wade.

At the time, feminists and their allies were encouraging state legislatures to liberalize their abortion laws. Lawsuits such as Roe v. Wade represented an alternative strategy for achieving that goal; victories in court ultimately made battles in state capitols moot, and some abortion-rights supporters argue that political triumphs might have proved to be more enduring than legal ones. Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who was then a prominent feminist attorney in New York, later said that lawsuits like Roe had "halted a political process that was moving in a reform direction."

In the early nineteen-seventies, some states had begun to rewrite their laws to reflect public opinion on abortion, which has remained remarkably stable over the years. (Roughly sixty per cent of Americans say that they support women's right to abortion; an even larger majority supports some limitations on that right, such as laws mandating parental consent for minors and those restricting late-term abortions.) But changes in state law were unpredictable. Although New York liberalized its abortion laws in 1970, the State Legislature voted to reinstate restrictions two years later, a move that was stopped by the veto of Governor Nelson Rockefeller.

Only a ruling by the Supreme Court could establish a nationwide right to choose abortion, and at the time it was clear that several Justices wanted to protect abortion rights. In 1965, the Court had voted, seven to two, to strike down a ban in Connecticut on the use of contraceptives, even by married people. The decision, in Griswold v. Connecticut, has widespread support, but the reasoning in Justice William O. Douglas's opinion has remained controversial. The case was decided during a period of expansive jurisprudence in the Court, when liberal Justices were identifying new rights for individuals under the Constitution. Douglas cited some of these rulings involving such rights as the "freedom to associate"—which is not mentioned in the Constitution—and went on to introduce another: the right to privacy. These rights exist in the Constitution, Douglas wrote, because the "specific guarantees in the Bill of Rights have penumbras, formed by emanations from those guarantees that help give them life and substance."

"Penumbras" and "emanations" are vague concepts on which to base an interpretation of the Constitution, and Douglas's opinion has been persistently criticized by conservatives. Nevertheless, by the early seventies a majority of the Court had endorsed the right to privacy. In 1972, Justice William J. Brennan, a consistently farsighted judicial tactician, wrote an opinion for the Court in Eisenstadt v. Baird that extended Griswold's ruling to include the right of unmarried people to obtain birth control. "If the right to privacy means anything, it is the right of the individual, married or single, to be free from unwanted governmental intrusions into matters so fundamentally affecting a

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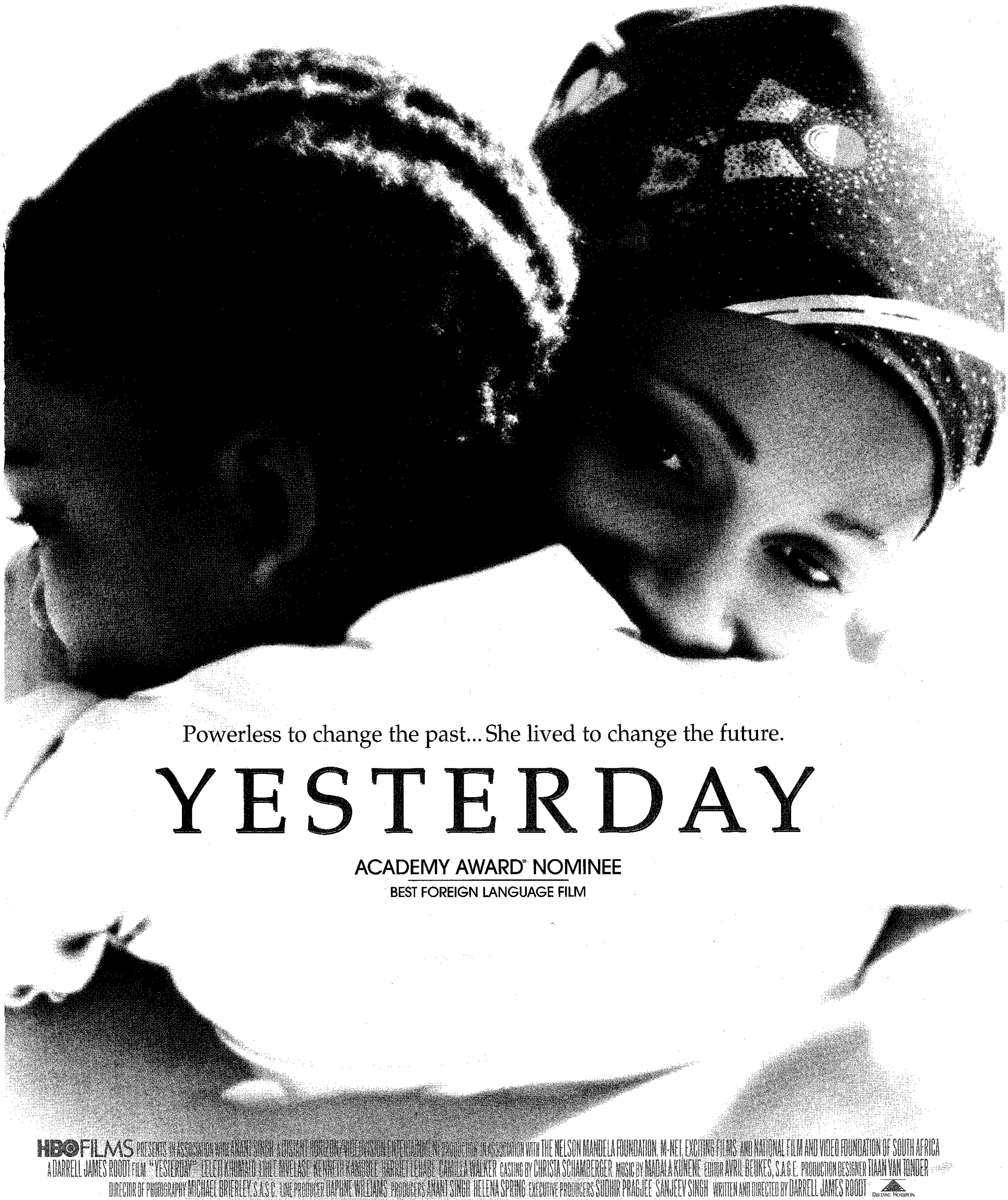

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DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MICHAEL BRIERLEY, S.A.S.C. LINE PRODUCER DAPHNE WILLIAMS PRODUCERS ANANT SINGH HELENA SPRING EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS SUDHIR PRAGJEE SANJEEV SINGH WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY DARRELL JAMES ROODT DISTANT HORIZON

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person as the decision whether to bear or beget a child," Brennan wrote. The phrase "bear or beget" all but announced a constitutional right to abortion.

The ruling in Roe, the next year, was hardly a surprise. Chief Justice Warren E. Burger, who was part of the seven-to-two majority in the case, assigned the decision to his childhood friend Harry A. Blackmun, who had joined the Court in 1970. Blackmun drafted some of the opinion in the library of the Mayo Clinic, the famous hospital complex in Rochester, Minnesota, where he had served as general counsel before becoming a judge. As Linda Greenhouse writes in her recent biography, "Becoming Justice Blackmun," "The staff had set aside a place for him to work and compiled a stack of books and articles on the history and practice of abortion."

In his opinion, Blackmun wrote that the "fundamental" right to privacy "is broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy," but, unlike decisions regarding birth control, the right was not absolute. Where a state could show that there was a "compelling state interest" in limiting the right to choose abortion, the Court would approve the restriction.

To discern the state's interest in regulating abortion, Blackmun devised a framework that relied on pregnancy's trimester calendar. The Justice canvassed the medical literature and determined that in the first trimester the prospect of carrying a pregnancy through to childbirth was clearly more risky for a woman than an early-term abortion. Thus, he wrote, the state could not restrict abortion during this period, and the decision "must be left to the medical judgment of the pregnant woman's attending physician." (Much of the opinion is expressed in terms of the rights of the physician, rather than those of the woman—a reflection of Blackmun's high regard for the medical profession.) But as the pregnancy continued, Blackmun wrote, laws could start to reflect the government's interest in protecting the fetus, not just the woman's rights. After the first trimester, the state could regulate abortions, but only in "ways that are reasonably related to maternal health." Finally, "subsequent to viability," the state could restrict or even ban abortion, except when it is necessary "for the preservation of the life or health of the mother."

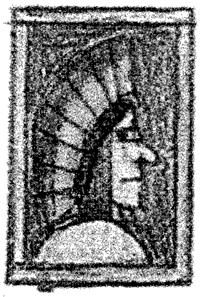
Blackmun's accomplishment was to establish a woman's right to abortion as well as a state's capacity to restrict it, and to place both on a foundation of solid medical science. In essence, Roe introduced a sliding scale, in which a woman's right to abortion was greatest early in her pregnancy and could be limited as the fetus grew. Even so, Blackmun insisted, any law restricting abortion, even late in a pregnancy, would have to insure protection of not only a woman's life but also her health. Blackmun elaborated on this point in his opinion in Doe v. Bolton, a challenge to Georgia's abortion law, which was decided by the Court on the same day as Roe. Again expressing the right to abortion as a doctor's choice, Blackmun wrote that the decision to perform the procedure "may be exercised in the light of all the factors—physical, emotional, psychological, familial, and the woman's age—relevant to the well-being of the patient." In other words, when a woman's health was at stake, at whatever stage of the pregnancy, she and her doctor should be able to choose an abortion.

MEET THE JANITOR 2 A.M.
mstevens

Roe declared that a state could no longer ban abortion, but the decision did not describe what kinds of restrictions would still be allowed. "You went from a standpoint that abortion was illegal in many states to a rather complex regulatory scheme outlined in Roe that involved three different points in pregnancy where the interests were different," James Bopp, Jr., the general counsel for the National Right to Life Committee, told me. In 1976, Congress passed the Hyde Amendment, which sought to prohibit the use of federal funds to pay for abortions, and the following year the Court voted, six to three, that women did not have a right to government-funded abortions.

The most important development with respect to abortion law, however, may have been O'Connor's appointment to the Court, in 1981. O'Connor's views on abortion were ambiguous. As Joan Biskupic writes in her new biography of O'Connor, her record as an Arizona state senator made "her appear more sympathetic to abortion-rights proponents than opponents but far from a major player on the issue, in any event." In her confirmation hearings, O'Connor, the first woman appointed to the Court, testified to an "abhorrence" of abortion but made no promises about how she would vote on the issue. On the Court, she voted independently from the beginning, surprising partisans on both sides. In her first important case on abortion law, in 1983, the majority struck down a set of rules in Akron, Ohio, that were clearly designed to discourage women from having abortions, including a regulation requiring that all abortions occurring after the first trimester take place in hospitals, and another calling for a twenty-four-hour waiting period for women seeking abortions. O'Connor wrote a dissenting opinion, in which she defended the regulations and attacked Blackmun's logic in Roe v. Wade.

Improvements in medical technology, O'Connor declared, would render the trimester analysis obsolete. Increasing numbers of premature infants would be able to survive birth at ever earlier stages of pregnancy, she argued, and women would be able to have safer abortions later in pregnancy. Thus, O'Connor wrote, in what became her most famous sentence as a Justice, "The Roe framework . . . is clearly on a collision course with itself. As the medical risks of various abortion procedures decrease, the point at which the state may regulate for reasons of maternal health is moved further forward to actual childbirth. As medical science becomes better able to provide for the separate existence of the fetus, the point of viability is moved further back toward conception."



O'Connor proposed a new legal framework to replace Roe. Adopting a phrase contained in a brief filed in the case by President Reagan's Justice Department, she wrote that abortion regulations should be upheld unless they created an "undue burden" on a woman seeking to have the procedure. O'Connor didn't define exactly what she meant, but she argued that, according to that standard, the Akron restrictions should have been upheld. In fact, O'Connor overestimated the degree to which science would advance. She was right in saying that more premature infants would survive, but she was wrong to conclude that the point of viability would shift in any meaningful way. In Roe, Blackmun had written, "Viability is usually placed at about seven months (28 weeks) but may occur earlier, even at 24 weeks." Today, thirty-two years after Roe, it is rare for a fetus younger than twenty-three or twenty-four weeks to survive. (The term of a normal pregnancy is thirty-eight to forty weeks.)

O'Connor did not call for Roe to be overturned, but she did suggest that the legality of abortion should be settled primarily by state legislatures, not by the courts. Quoting an opinion by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., from 1904, she wrote, "In determining whether the State imposes an 'undue burden,' we must keep in mind that, when we are concerned with extremely sensitive issues, such as the one involved here, 'the appropriate forum for their resolution in a democracy is the legislature.'" In 1987, four years after the Akron case, Robert Bork's nomination to the Supreme Court failed largely because he declined to endorse Roe, Griswold, or even the existence of a right to privacy in the Constitution. By 1991, when Clarence Thomas replaced Thurgood Marshall, the Court had four votes to overturn Roe: William H. Rehnquist, Byron White, Antonin Scalia, and Thomas. But O'Connor, whose political instincts were acute, never joined them. As she wrote in Webster v. Reproductive Health Services, in 1989, which upheld a Missouri law prohibiting most abortions in public hospitals, "When the constitutional invalidity of a State's abortion statute actually turns upon the constitutional validity of Roe, there will be time enough to reexamine Roe. And to do so carefully."

In the late eighties, Pennsylvania passed a series of laws, known as the Abortion Control Act, that were among the most restrictive abortion laws in the country. The legal fight over the laws, which featured both O'Connor and Alito in prominent roles, continues to shape the abortion debate today. The act called for the notification of parents of minors, a twenty-four-hour waiting period (the same restriction that the Supreme Court had rejected in the Akron case), a ban on "gender-selection" abortions, and a ban on abortions after twenty-four weeks except in cases of risk to the mother's life. The most controversial provision of the laws also required married women seeking abortions to notify their husbands first.

Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania challenged several provisions of the act, and in 1991 the case, Planned Parenthood v. Casey, went before the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, which Alito had joined the previous year. The three judges on the panel of the Third Circuit agreed that most of the provisions being disputed were constitutional, but two of them thought that the spousal-

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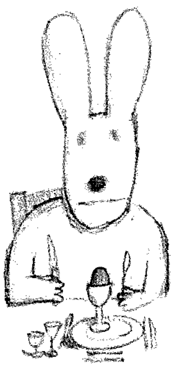
notification provision interfered too much with a woman's rights. Alito disagreed, and wrote a partial dissenting opinion in which, invoking O'Connor's logic, he argued that the regulation did not amount to an "undue burden" on women. Spousal notification would affect very few women in Pennsylvania, Alito said. The evidence in the case showed that between seventy and eighty per cent of women who seek abortions are unmarried, he noted, and ninety-five per cent of married women who seek abortions do tell their husbands. "Thus, it is immediately apparent," Alito wrote, that the law "cannot affect more than about five per cent of married women seeking abortions or an even smaller percentage of all women desiring abortions." In light of these small numbers, there was no "broad practical impact needed to establish an 'undue burden.' "

The following year, in the midst of the 1992 Presidential campaign, the Supreme Court agreed to hear an appeal of the Casey decision, and the sixty-eight days during which the Justices considered the case were some of the most charged in the Court's history. Six Justices—Rehnquist, White, O'Connor, Scalia, Anthony Kennedy, and Thomas—had expressed reservations about Roe, and lawyers for the first Bush Administration called on the Justices to use the case to overturn the decision. Kathryn Kolbert, the attorney representing Planned Parenthood, warned the Justices during her oral argument that upholding the Pennsylvania law was tantamount to nullifying the two-decade-old landmark. The Court responded carefully. In a rare joint opinion for a five-to-four majority, issued on June 29, 1992, O'Connor, Kennedy, and David Souter reaffirmed what they called "Roe's essential holding," which included "a recognition of the right of the woman to choose to have an abortion before viability and to obtain it without undue interference from the State," and "a confirmation of the State's power to restrict abortions after fetal viability, if the law contains exceptions for pregnancies which endanger a woman's life or health."



Then, in a victory for O'Connor, the joint opinion of the Court officially embraced the "undue burden" standard. The new rule meant that there was no longer a "fundamental" right to abortion, as Roe had posited, and that the Court would no longer use the trimester framework. Applying the "undue burden" standard to the Pennsylvania law, the Justices upheld all of its provisions with the exception of spousal notification. They dismissed Alito's claim that the law affected few women, noting icily that "the proper focus of constitutional inquiry is the group for whom the law is a restriction, not the group for whom the law is irrelevant." The Pennsylvania law, they wrote, had overlooked the problem of abortion and domestic violence: "We must not blind ourselves to the fact that the significant number of women who fear for their safety and the safety of their children are likely to be deterred from procuring an abortion as surely as if the Commonwealth had outlawed abortion in all cases."

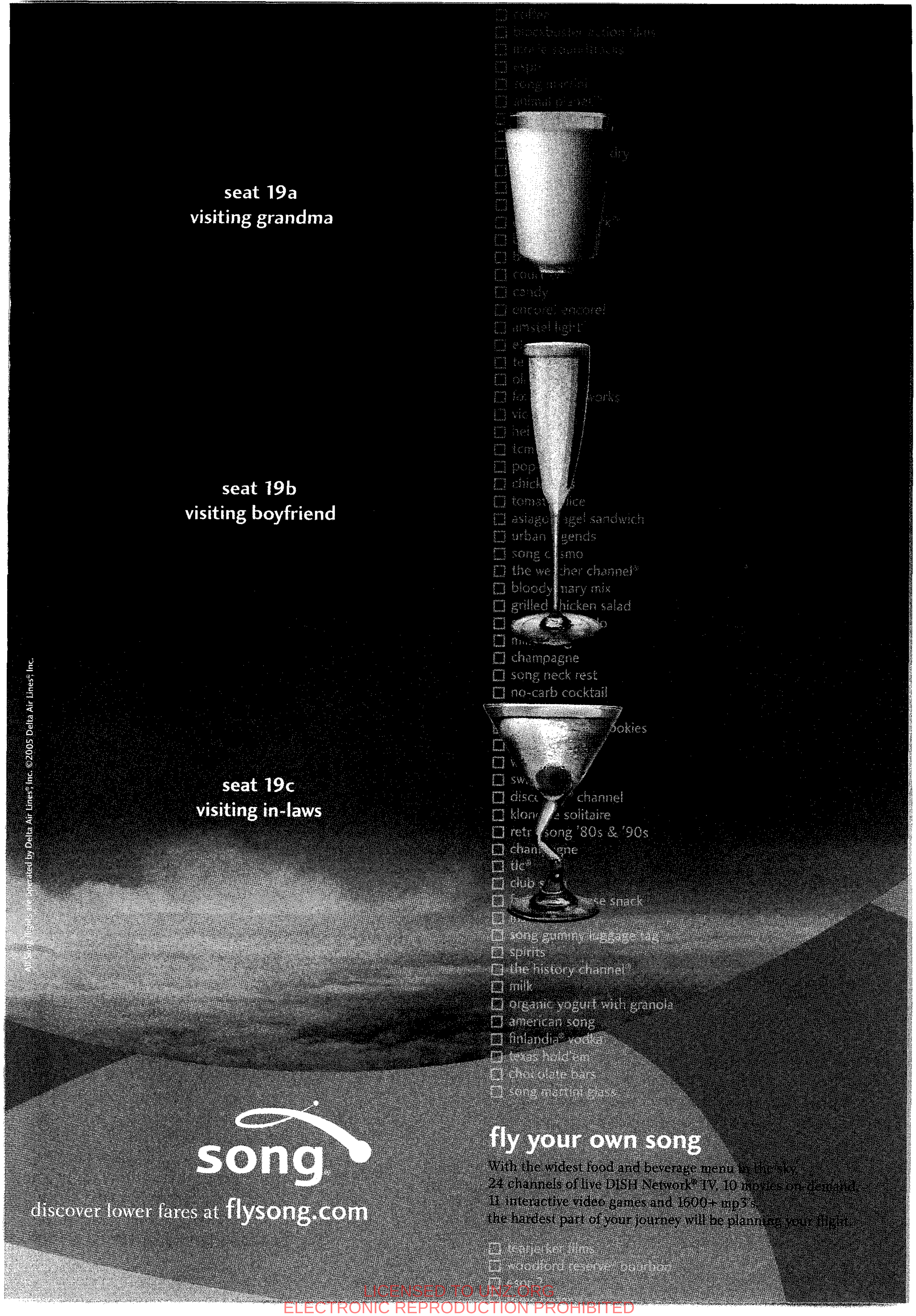
The decision in Casey represented a more definitive vindication of Roe than at first appeared to be the case. The Court stated more clearly than ever that the right to choose early-term abortions was protected by the Constitution, and although the Justices rejected Roe's trimester analysis, they asserted that the key moment in pregnancy, from a legal perspective, was when the fetus became viable—as Blackmun had done two decades earlier. Though the decision placed "substantial obstacles" in the way of women seeking abortions, said Louise Melling, the director of the Reproductive Freedom Project of the American Civil Liberties Union, "Casey has a fuller discussion than even Roe of why reproductive rights matter to women. And the spousal-notice decision is very clear about what it would mean for women if you gave men that kind of power."

Some opponents of Alito's nomination to the Supreme Court have suggested that his opinion in Casey means that, as a Justice, he will vote to overturn Roe. Citing the decision in an analysis of Alito's record, published just after his nomination, the liberal group People for the American Way asserted that he is "hostile to basic reproductive privacy rights," and his mother, Rose Alito, told reporters, "Of course he's against abortion." But Leonard I. Garth, the judge for whom Alito clerked from 1976 to 1977, and who is now his colleague on the Third Circuit, told the Washington *Post*, "If what you're thinking is 'Would Sam overrule Roe?'—he would not. He might have restrictions and limitations, but it is a precedent he'd honor. As a previous mentor and as a present colleague, I don't think he'll overrule it."

In three cases after Casey, Alito reached conclusions that protected abortion rights. In 1995, he upheld a challenge to a Pennsylvania law stipulating that women who wanted to use Medicaid funds to abort a pregnancy resulting from rape or incest must report the incident to the police. In 1997, he upheld a New Jersey law that prevented parents from suing on behalf of a fetus in a wrongful-death action. The parents had argued that fetuses were individuals who could be plaintiffs in lawsuits; in his opinion Alito wrote, "The Supreme Court has held that a fetus is not a 'person' within the meaning of the Fourteenth Amendment." Finally, in 2000, he struck down a New Jersey ban on so-called partial-birth abortion. In each of these cases, the judge followed Supreme Court precedent; on the whole, his record does not suggest that he is an ideologue bent on overturning Roe.

The New Hampshire parental-notification case will be heard on November 30th, before Alito's confirmation hearings begin. But Justices' votes are not official until decisions have been handed down, usually several months after oral arguments. With the Senate vote on Alito's nomination tentatively scheduled for January 20th, he could end up voting in the case, which involves one of the oldest and most controversial aspects of abortion law—the exception for a woman's health.

In 2003, New Hampshire passed a law prohibiting physicians from performing an abortion on a minor without giving one of the minor's parents at least forty-eight hours' notice. Physicians can dispense with the notification if they can certify that the "abortion is necessary to prevent the minor's death and there is insufficient time to provide the required notice." The main issue in the case is whether the state must also establish an exception to the notification require-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ment if the minor's health is at risk.

Starting with Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton, in 1973, the Court has consistently maintained that abortion laws must protect the "health" of women, a term that has been regarded as a loophole by the pro-life movement. "A 'health' exception just renders every other regulation on abortion a nullity," James Bopp, of the National Right to Life Committee, says. "Abortionists believe that every abortion is good for a woman's health. And the general statistics do say that there is a statistically greater risk to the woman's health by having normal-term childbirth than by having an abortion. So now that most aborting physicians make a living doing abortions, they will always find that a health exception applies, especially when you can talk about psychological or emotional health." On the other side of the debate, abortion-rights advocates argue that the absence of a health exception could place women in great danger. "The forty-eight-hour delay could result in permanent and serious health consequences. The state hasn't disputed that there are conditions short of death, like infertility, liver damage, and blindness, that could occur if abortions are delayed," Louise Melling, of the A.C.L.U., says.

Ruling in the state's favor in the New Hampshire case would not require the Justices to overturn Roe or Casey, but it would be a signal that the post-O'Connor Court is receptive to tighter restrictions on abortion. "Under current doctrine, the Supreme Court has said a woman's health is paramount, even after fetal viability; that's been true since Doe, and even Casey reaffirms it," said Dawn Johnsen, a professor at the Indiana University School of Law, in Bloomington, and a former legal director of the National Abortion Rights Action League. (The group is now called NARAL Pro-Choice America.) "We'll see if that's still true after this case."

The health exception also figures prominently in another abortion controversy that the Supreme Court is likely to address this term. More than ninety per cent of abortions in the United States take place in the first trimester—before the twelfth week of pregnancy—and most of the rest take place before the twentieth week, but in recent years abortion-rights opponents have been fighting to ban what they call partial-birth, or late-term, abortions. These involve a procedure known as "intact dilation and extraction," or D & X, and are gruesome. As the Justice Department described the practice, in a recent brief to the Supreme Court, "a physician partially delivers the fetus intact (i.e., without first dismembering it)"— pulling it out by the feet—"and then kills the fetus, typically by puncturing its skull and vacuuming out its brain." The late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, an abortion-rights supporter, opposed D & X abortions, saying, "I think this is just too close to infanticide. A child has been born and it has exited the uterus and what on Earth is this procedure?" Few D & X procedures are performed—while there are no reliable data, estimates range from six hundred to five thousand a year—and these include severe cases of hydrocephalus in which the fetus's head is too large to pass through the birth canal and its chances of survival would be low.

In 2000, in Stenberg v. Carhart, the Supreme Court ruled, five to four, with O'Connor in the majority, that Nebraska's ban on partial-birth abortion was unconstitutional. Justice Stephen G. Breyer, in his opinion in the case, wrote that the law, which subjected doctors to prison terms of up to twenty years, could not stand because it "lacks any exception for 'the preservation of the ... health of the mother.' " The law also represented an "undue burden," under the Casey precedent, he argued, because it was so vaguely worded that it would have banned not only D & X abortions but also the much more common "dilation and evacuation" (D & E) procedure, which is used in ninety-five per cent of abortions performed between thirteen and twenty weeks. "People talk about 'late term' abortions, but these laws ban some very common kinds of situations," Melling says. "We're talking about what happens when there's a bad result from an amnio and people decide to end their pregnancies. That's what these laws want to stop."

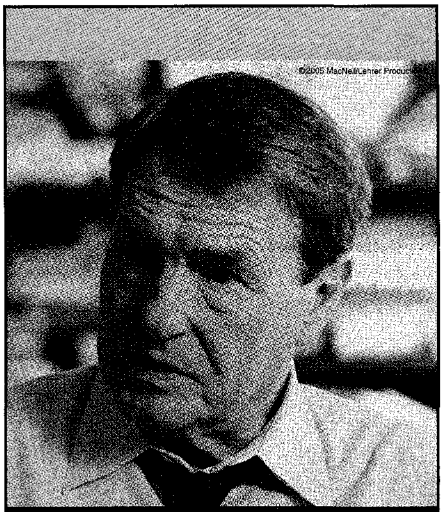
Congress responded to the Stenberg decision by passing a law that was nearly identical to the one the Court had just voided. The Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, which President Bush signed in 2003, has been declared unconstitutional in three separate cases, one of which has reached a federal appeals court. On September 23rd, the Justice Department asked the Supreme Court to overturn the first of those rulings and reinstate the federal ban. The brief, by Paul D. Clement, the Solicitor General, was filed shortly before Bush announced Alito's nomination and resurrects Alito's reasoning in his Casey opinion on spousal notification. According to the brief, the federal appeals court had "failed to show that the Act's prohibition of partial-birth abortion would affect the health of the mother in more than a small fraction of the cases to which the Act applies." Thus it is possible that in the case from New Hampshire and the one regarding the federal law, Alito, as part of a new majority on the Court, may yet see his interpretation of the maternal health exception upheld.

The reappraisal of Roe ultimately came to include the original plaintiff herself. In the nineteen-eighties, McCorvey publicly revealed her identity, and for several years served as a spokeswoman for abortion rights. But in 1995 she had a religious awakening and became committed to fighting the cause that she once embodied. In 2003, McCorvey filed a federal lawsuit asking the Supreme Court to overturn Roe v. Wade "on the basis of changed factual and legal conditions." She lost the case, but in 2004 Judge Edith H. Jones, of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, who is frequently mentioned as a candidate for the Supreme Court, wrote a concurring opinion in the case, in which she declared, "Hard and social science will of course progress even though the Supreme Court averts its eyes. One may fervently hope that the Court will someday acknowledge such developments and reevaluate Roe and Casey accordingly." Earlier this year, the Supreme Court declined to hear McCorvey's appeal.

There is substantial agreement among partisans on both sides of the abortion debate about what would happen if the Court decided to reëvaluate Roe. In 2004, the Center for Reproductive Rights published a study called "What If Roe Fell?," in which it predicted that abortion rights would probably remain protected in twenty states, including New York and California, if Roe was overturned. At the same time, the study's authors reported that abortion would probably be banned in at least twenty-one states, including much of the South, and would become subject to greater restrictions in many others.

Still, overturning Roe does not seem imminent, even if Alito joins the Court. Once O'Connor retires, three Justices in the Casey majority will remain; Ginsburg, who joined in 1993, and Breyer, who was appointed a year later, support abortion rights; and the new Chief Justice, John G. Roberts, Jr., has made respect for precedent a touchstone of his judicial philosophy. In his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Roberts said that "the Casey decision itself, which applies the principles of stare decisis to Roe v. Wade, is itself a precedent of the Court entitled to respect under principles of stare decisis. And that would be the body of law that any judge confronting an issue in this area would begin with; not simply the decision in Roe v. Wade, but its reaffirmation in the Casey decision." Alito used similar formulations in meetings with senators before his hearings, telling Joseph Lieberman, of Connecticut, that, as the Senator recounted it, "Roe was precedent on which people—a lot of people—relied, and had been precedent now for decades and therefore deserved great respect."

The abortion-rights movement has lived on the edge of calamity for so long that a measure of fatalism has come to be second nature. "Currently, O'Connor provides the fifth vote for meaningful protection of the right," Dawn Johnsen, of Indiana University, says. "But, even with O'Connor on the Court, the standard the Court has adopted has allowed states to approve restrictions that make abortions far more expensive, and that discourage doctors from offering abortions in large parts of the country. Soon, you could have a standard that said anything short of a criminal ban is not an 'undue burden.' The Court has upheld one-day waiting periods, so maybe they'll approve one week. They could say that women do have to notify their husbands, after all. They could say that all abortions have to be done in hospitals. It's already hard to get an abortion in many states, and these are rules that could make it impossible." But the fact remains that through thirty-two years, and the appointment of seven Justices by Republican Presidents, Roe has endured. ♦



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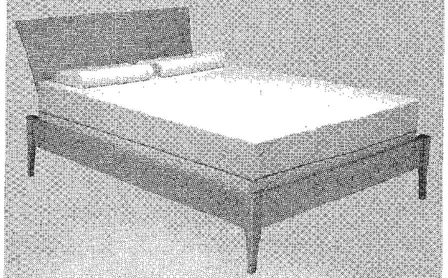

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LETTER FROM LOUISIANA

SHELTER AND THE STORM

When Katrina's refugees came to town.

BY KATHERINE BOO

Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana, is a hub of oil and fishing industries on the Gulf of Mexico. The hamlets along its waterways rise in elevation and affluence as they increase in distance from the coast. Trailers, aluminum foil in their windows to beat back the sun, give way to communities screened by oak and cypress trees. One of the loveliest neighborhoods is Bayou Black. There are thoroughbreds on lawns there, and an alligator farm. The week's sole rush hour begins Saturday before dawn, when fathers and sons leave home to fish and hunt. Later that morning, the shell-pink great house of a nineteenth-century sugarcane plantation opens for tours. The gift shop, in what the docents call "the servants' quarters," sells books with such titles as "Myths of American Slavery" and "Slaves by Choice." Hurricane Katrina only grazed this house and its environs, pulling shingles off roofs and whipping the moss from the trees. After the levees of New Orleans broke and poor blacks fled, Bayou Black was only sixty miles down one of the few open highways from the city.

When an emergency shelter in Houma, the parish seat, filled quickly, several members of a Catholic church in Bayou Black asked local officials if they could open the basketball court of their recreation center to refugees. Earlier in the summer, the pressing social issue at the gym had involved the casings of sunflower seeds: a sign at the entrance read "What Goes in Your Mouth You Must Swallow Not Spit Back Out on the Bleachers." On the evening of September 3rd, though, a gunshot victim, a four-hundred-pound woman, and a man with a broken spine arrived at the gym simultaneously, joining two hundred other evacuees. The only medical expertise on hand belonged to an eighteen-year-old lawn cutter who had once passed a lifeguard course. "He could have told me his back was broken before I moved him," the teen-ager later complained. A Cajun woman named Roxie Bergeron had put aside her duties as a Catholic youth-group leader to organize the volunteers. "None of us knows what we are doing," she said. "This is Shelter 101." Other white residents were more conflicted than Bergeron about giving refuge to former New Orleanians. Shrimpers, boat captains, off-shore oil workers, and the personal-injury lawyers attendant on these trades wanted the gym available for themselves and their families, should another hurricane hit.

A thirty-year-old black businessman named Gary Harrell managed the night shift at the shelter. He had a shaved head, Pentecostal leanings, and subscriptions to the *Atlantic Monthly* and the *Economist;* he'd grown up down the street. "There are a hundred thousand people in this parish, but we think we're Magnolia, Mississippi," he said. "The whole identity and appeal of this place is as a not-New Orleans. So what's happening now is something that never crossed people's minds, except in nightmares: that New Orleans would be coming to them."

Still, the Bayou Black volunteers, like many other Americans, were eager to play a role in what followed the evacuation. Popular sympathy, at least outside Terrebonne Parish, was with the displaced people, now known collectively as victims; and with that concern came the opportunity ("should they choose to take it" was the standard qualifier) to turn tragedy into renewal. Former residents of the Lower Ninth Ward and other segregated neighborhoods of New Orleans might now be supported in their attempts to advance into the cultural and economic mainstream—"to ascend to normalcy," as Gary Harrell put it. It was a romance of transformation, and for some of the adults unpacking trash bags of possessions on the basketball court this idea of fresh starts had a basis in fact: lost in the flood was evidence of schooling that had stopped at ninth grade, misadventures in the work world, pending appointments in court. Even the children of the Bayou Black gym—among them a dark-skinned thirteen-year-old girl in a donated tie-dyed T-shirt—sensed possibilities in the wake of disaster.

Jasmine Williams, a thirteen-year-old evacuee, outside the Bayou Black recreation center. Photograph by Christopher Anderson.

MAGNUM

The girl's name was Jasmine Williams, and she understood that she was unwelcome in Terrebonne Parish. She had been reared by an unstable and uncaring mother, so this feeling was nothing new. Nor was her shelter life much different, emotionally speaking, from the one that she'd left behind: her mother's boyfriend had just taken seventy-five dollars from her in order, Jasmine suspected, to buy drugs. "Then my mom thrashed all over me for being mad about it," Jasmine said. But, as Gary Harrell gently insisted, this was a time to look ahead, not to sulk about familiar injustices. And late one night in the second week of September she removed from her mouth a pacifier that she had swiped from an infant-supply drawer and articulated her understanding of the work at hand: "You know that song by Mike Jones? 'They used to love to dis me, now they run to hug and kiss me—now?' The rest of the song is pimps and Escalades, but the dis-and-kiss part is what goes through my head since I been coming here. Like maybe before the storm they treated you not so good, said you were stupid or something, but after, it might be—like, if you change from here on out and don't get put out of school and be working and all, people might be noticing you, knowing your name."

Jasmine was curious about Gary Harrell. "Beaucoup smart," she said, adding hopefully, "A person I can rock with." Her sense of the community where she now lived came largely from him. "When I was growing up," Gary liked to say, "they allowed one of us colored kids in every class at Mulberry Elementary." Returning home after graduating from college, in Birmingham, Alabama, he discovered that his studies in international business and Japanese qualified him only to sell Toyotas. Recently, though, he had started a management-consulting business. Now he hoped to help Jasmine and the other evacuees make their own adjustments and advancements.

Mattress-to-mattress living turns private lives into public theatre, and Jasmine, after settling in, began hovering in corners and doorways to observe her neighbors. She was particularly interested in a middle-aged couple, Carolyn Tompkins and Gus Davis, who, despite long residency in New Orleans East, had what others in the shelter called "country-ass ways." After a lifetime with a volatile mother, Jasmine is skittish; Carolyn and Gus mesmerized her with their placidity. He is illiterate, with failing eyesight, and had worked as an oysterman before Katrina and its accompanying oil spills. Carolyn has a mellow laugh and, in Jasmine's estimation, a woeful fashion sense: she wore a faded house dress, pink flip-flops, and a black polyester do-rag every day. The couple's great interest was their sons, aged one and almost three, whom Carolyn rocked for hours in a donated chair to which someone had affixed stickers that said "Wassup?"

Carolyn had worked in the kitchen of a New Orleans nursing home, and had taken Gus and the toddlers there to weather the storm. In the days that followed, twenty-two elderly patients died after the electric power went out, floodwaters poured in, and medicine washed away. The police and other officials failed to organize a rescue, but eventually the brother of a co-worker arrived from Georgia with a boat and a big red truck. Most of the employees and survivors ended up in Terrebonne Parish. Now Carolyn's older boy asked anxious questions about dead people, and shook when he was taken to the bathroom. His parents could only guess what he'd seen while they had been moving patients to the top floor and taking bodies downstairs. "The main thing is to be with these little guys," Carolyn said, handing a stuffed Elmo to her one-year-old. "So if the government and the folks here want to take a bit of our lives out of our hands for a minute, help us get some work and all, we'll be coming back strong to do the rest."

Others at the shelter, among them Jasmine's mother, sought a different kind of aid. Experience had made them skeptical of government notions of opportunity and the longevity of public concern, so they were placing their bets on an immediate redistribution of wealth. Reports on CNN served as tutorials in which they learned that the traumas of cute young children had more cash value than those of adolescents like Jasmine, and that to elicit maximum sympathy from potential donors one should have, or might now invent, a lost pet.

"Trixie—that a dog's name or a cat's?" a woman asked Jasmine's mother as they sat one afternoon on the recreation center's front porch. "I'm looking for something that fits one of them weenie dogs." Jasmine's mother wasn't sure about pet names, but she agreed that strategy was in order. She said, "The way people helped during the Chinaman thing"—someone proffered the word "tsunami"—"I best be getting a house!"

Also sitting on the porch was a mother of four who was in the throes of heroin withdrawal. She had, in fact, lost a cat she loved. However, the woman's teenage daughter, who had left home with only a handbag and three negligee sets, was probably right in saying that its name, Hootchie-Mamma Kitty, was "too ghetto" for middle-class sympathy.

In an affluent society, a deficit of things can swiftly be remedied. Within a week, surplus food was rotting in Louisiana shelters; bags of secondhand clothing filled back rooms and hallways, then spilled outdoors, much of it never to be unpacked. It was easy to forget that, before Katrina, even in the worst recesses of the Melpomene or Calliope projects of New Orleans, people had clothes on their backs, and no one starved, and almost every family had a television. What they often lacked were passable educations, regular medical care, jobs with benefits, or firsthand knowledge of how most other Americans live—New Orleans's low-income population being one of the least mobile and most isolated in the country. This poverty of opportunity was harder to redress and, at least at first, impolitic to discuss.

One evening, on a television in the gym, President Bush articulated his version of the romance of transformation, in which suffering made victims stronger, and compassion bridged divides of race and class. "In the journey ahead you're not alone," he told the displaced, promising an influx of public and private aid to help them and their communities "not just to survive, but to thrive." Outside the shelter, where federal aid had not materialized, Gary Harrell's romanticism was being tested. Throwing up his arms, he said, "I don't have a clue what to do about Pookie!" Pookie, Jasmine's cousin, was a disturbed seven-year-old boy whose grandmother operated on the theory "A baby's old enough to sock you, he's old enough to be socked back." He had crept past the recreation center's outdoor swimming pool (unavailable to the "out-of-town guests") and had set off for the road that linked Bayou Black to the rest of the parish. Meanwhile, police officers arrived at the gym; they were returning a middle-aged woman who had pulled a knife on her daughter for "opening her legs when she's not fixed."

In the gym office, Jasmine dialled a series of phone numbers of male acquaintances, her pacifier clenched like a cigarette at the side of her mouth. Though she was a little afraid of growing up—not just the sex thing, but the distinct possibility of competitive reprisals from her mother—she often felt odd, unlovely, in the shelter. Someone outside it, she hoped, might tell her otherwise. "Do you remember me?" she asked these men again and again.

As Bush's speech concluded, with a call for armies of compassion, a telephone rang next to Jasmine. The caller was a Midwestern businessman with the sort of offer that the volunteers had prayed for: a big house on a farm an hour north of Wichita which some of Bayou Black's evacuees were welcome to use. Gary grabbed a legal pad to write down the details. Many of the adults were eager to work, and the volunteers had been finding jobs for them on pipelines, in laundries, and at a waste-treatment company. But the new workers had nowhere to live. Although local churches had raised enough money to cover security deposits and a month's rent, FEMA representatives and oil-platform repairmen had taken almost every available room in the parish.

While Gary talked with the Midwestern businessman, Carolyn wandered in to get a towel for the shower. Soon she was perched behind Gary. "A farm?" she asked. "I'll milk 'em, I'll rake up after 'em, I'll even cut 'em up if need be—if it's a private place to stay." Carolyn and Gus had lived in an apartment just off Chef Menteur Highway in New Orleans East—a strip of pawnshops and motels where junkies sold sex for the price of a catfish platter. Yet the couple had made a stable home there, and it had been lost in the levee break. Now Gus had taken a grass-cutting job. It didn't pay as well as his oystering had, but, after a week and a half at the shelter, he was worried less about the money than about his sons. "They're changing here—too much distraction and too many thug babies," he said. "These kids starting to walk the walk and talk the talk, and still in diapers." He wanted to get them out fast.

Gary's telephone voice had grown strained, and he'd dropped his legal pad on the table. "Well, sir, I don't mean to sound ungrateful for your offer," he told the businessman, "but we have to do this right for our people. And we certainly don't want to be sending them into indentured servitude!" There were apparently opportunists outside the gym, too. Carolyn went, dejected, to the shower.

By the middle of September, the evacuees had realized that federal aid was not imminent, and that the help they needed to re-start their lives might come more quickly from local residents. Qualifying for such donations required conforming to the Terrebonne definition of "deserving poor." To be deserving, one had to be willing to work, of course, but there were other expectations: to attend church on Sunday; to wear the donated clothes that exposed the least flesh; to be quiet when laughing and talking among themselves, and loud and clear when expressing their gratitude. "Everyone's got their mask on now," Gary Harrell's mother, who was tutoring the shelter children, said. Some evacuees saw a liability in what had been their lives' great expenditure—glittering gold-capped teeth—and began to cover their mouths when they smiled.

Gary believed that, as Terrebonne residents got to know Carolyn, Gus, and the rest of the evacuees, they'd see a common ground, or at least a situation that served their own interest. "Their energy and eagerness to work are going to help us compete economically," he said. Terrebonne community leaders also sensed that Katrina's destruction had created an economic opportunity. The parish president and his aides were trying to persuade displaced New Orleans businesses to relocate in the parish.

The officials had had enough of the displaced people, however. Two weeks after the arrival of the first evacuees, the Houma *Courier* ran a one-sentence story: "The Terrebonne Consolidated Government announced this morning that local shelters are full and are no longer able to accept evacuees." The assertion was false; the shelters had space for at least a thousand more people. But it reflected the sensibility of a community in which the word "comfortable" had become a term of art. "We don't want people to get too comfortable here," the director of the major shelter in Houma liked to say. Local unease increased when one of its residents was charged with intent to dis-

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"Sometimes I wonder if it would've been better having one big marriage instead of a lot of little ones."

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tribute prescription pills—despite the fact that, before Katrina, Houma's own drug dealers sold crack, methamphetamine, and the steroids ubiquitous in a community that took high-school football to heart. Terrebonne's predicament was an intensified version of a classic American dilemma: the belief that ghettoizing a disadvantaged population is morally wrong, joined to the conviction that the disadvantaged population might be a lot happier in the next county. At a public meeting after the drug bust, a city official said, to general approval, "We don't want to be the people who turned away the refugees, but we don't want a Superdome situation."

The recreation center looked out on the bayou, which most of the evacuees avoided—there were alligators there. So it was considered daring when Carolyn and Gus began taking their toddlers to the water's edge each afternoon, when the light made everything around them glimmer gold and red. "I want their eyes to be steady full of something beautiful," Carolyn said, "enough beautiful to push the ugly things they've seen out of their brains."

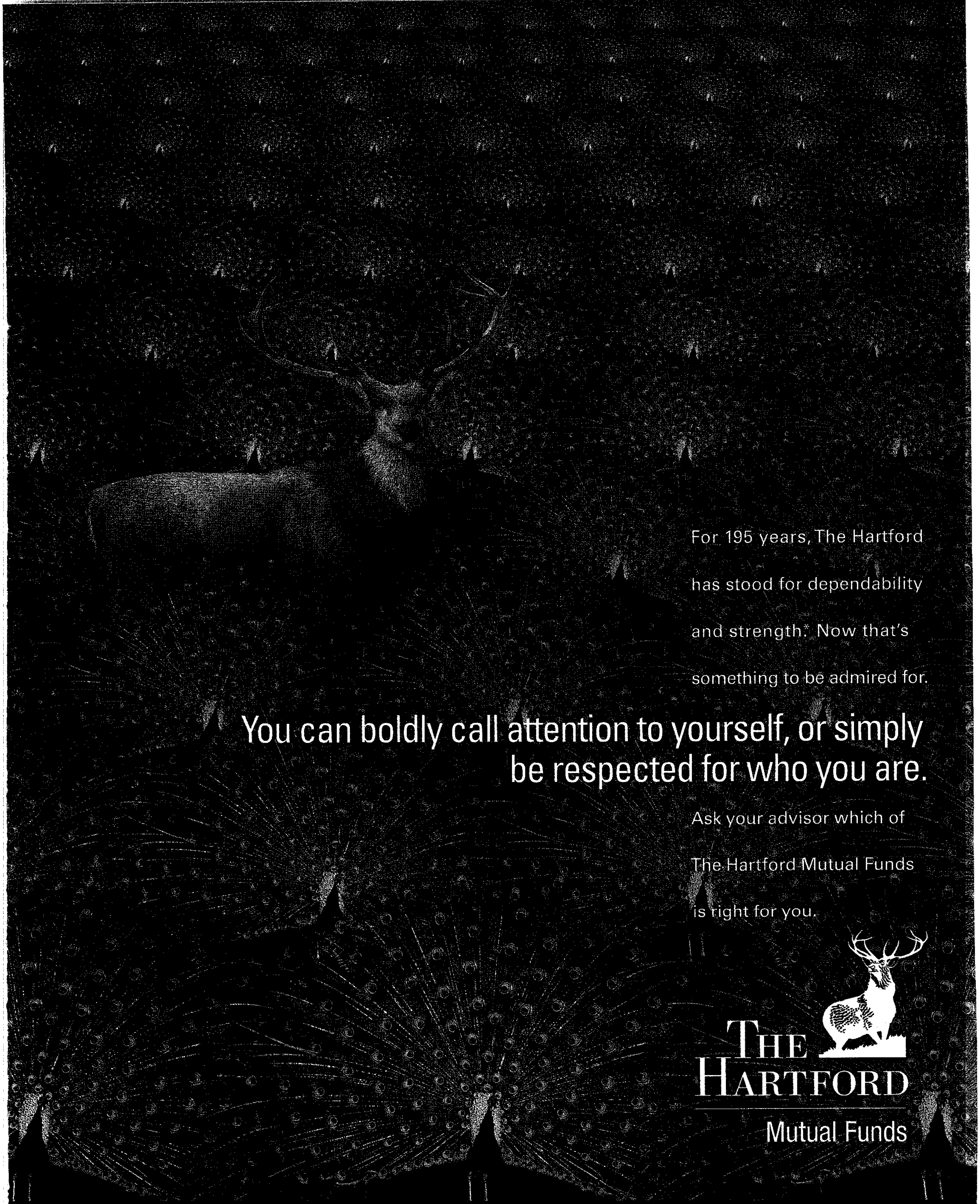
One afternoon, Jasmine went to the bayou, too. It was the most beautiful place she'd ever been. Like many neglected children, she'd grown used to her lot in life, and barely paid attention when her mother asked the volunteers, "You got kids? I been trying to get rid of mine for some time." Jasmine had an eleven-year-old brother, and neither of them expected their mother to do "regular stuff," like helping with homework. Their mother said, "My kids don't even ask me anymore—my nerves is bad, so they gets beat up after one problem. Other thing they know is when I put that forty dollars' worth of food on the counter every month and they eat it too fast, they be going hungry until next month comes around."

One kind of poverty is that of the imagination—the inability to envision a future truly different from the present. Jasmine had long judged people based on whether or not they gave her food and clothing, but, as she watched Carolyn and Gus and other families, she found herself mulling different gauges of worth. She'd been working lately on a definition of love. "Maybe it's that, like, you honor somebody and they honor you back," she said carefully. "If you do for them without being all, like, See, I did this for you, now you best do something for me—like, you just do it for the kind of your heart."

Jasmine had seen her father only once since she was five. She knew that he had been in prison for selling drugs and attempted murder, and that he now put siding on houses. He was six feet two, had a place in suburban Minneapolis, and had sponsored the three best days of her life: "It was February and he was in a car, and he came by his cousin's house. I was playing in the parking lot then, so I caught a look of him. I knew right away—I said, 'That my daddy,' but because I'd grown big he didn't know me. But then he did know, and he took me eating at Manhattan's in New Orleans and bowling and to a movie, then he took me by my other cousin's, then we ate doughnuts, then he brought me to Avondale, too." Jasmine's furious dialling now had direction: she would ask her father to take her in.

In August, before the levees broke, the Associated Press began a story on New Orleans violence by citing a study: "Last year, university researchers conducted an experiment in which police fired seven hundred blank rounds in a New Orleans neighborhood in a single afternoon. No one called to report the gunfire." Afterward, the experiment was mentioned in newspapers, magazines, and on television to illustrate the morally deadening effects of the inner city. The report, like that of Terrebonne's "full" shelters, was incorrect, yet it agreed with the thinking of policymakers as Katrina stories grew less frequent on cable TV: though New Orleans could be rebuilt, its former inhabitants might be beyond saving.

Historically, considerations of poverty range between extremes: sentimentality and sensationalism, structural causes and individual volition. In this case, the moment of attention to structural causes passed quickly. On September 15th, the President spoke of aggressive action against "deep, persistent poverty" with "roots in a history of racial discrimination." Two weeks later, members of the Republican Party were using the deficiencies of the evacuees as evidence that contemporary anti-poverty approaches were ineffectual. Congressional debate did not then turn to more hopeful approaches; it centered instead on how many billions of dollars to cut from Medicaid and other social programs in order to offset the cost of rebuilding the Gulf Coast. The politicians perhaps understood their constituencies: a public that desires to help the poor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One day, a family in the Bayou Black gym got a real opportunity to transform their lives. In Kalamazoo, Michigan, some Catholics had been thinking about how to direct their charitable instincts, and a housewife there called a nun in Terrebonne in search of a large family. Within a matter of days, the largest family at the gym—a middle-aged laundress from the Ninth Ward, a seventeen-year-old girl who spent her shelter days writing in her journal ("My story is basically ghetto, ghetto, ghetto," she said), and seven others—had got a furnished five-bedroom house, rent-free, for two years, down the street from the home of Kalamazoo's former mayor. They also got a minivan; a line on good jobs; medical and dental care; and parochial-school tuition for the seventeen-year-old and three younger children—"but only if the family is inclined that way," the Kalamazoo housewife said, noting that the local public schools were excellent, too. This turn of events raised expectations throughout the shelter, though nothing like it happened again.

The children in the gym with whom Jasmine felt most kinship were the unaccountably cheerful teen-age sons of the woman who was withdrawing from heroin. The boys, whose names were Christopher and Crishad Riley, dated their mother's addiction to the night, five years before, when their father, having finished his shift in the kitchen at Applebee's, was robbed, shot, and killed by a fifteen-year-old girl. "After that, Katrina is nothing," their mother said. She was forthcoming about the misery in which she'd let her children live—"like Christopher finding me passed out for five hours, my drawers off and the handkerchief still tied on my arm." But the state's shrinking child-protection system hadn't intervened to help the Riley kids, and the public schools had contributed further to their misfortunes. Three-quarters of the students in the New Orleans school system were impoverished, and, by Louisiana's own standards, most of them were getting an "academically unacceptable" education—intellectual losses, endemic to inner cities, that don't engage the non-urban imagination in the way that crime stories do. Christopher, a high-school junior who hoped to attend Florida State, could recall reading only one book. "I liked it," he said. "It was about a king that was unhappy and he did everything to be happy and he never found a way to be happy." This achievement put him well ahead of fourteen-year-old Crishad, who considered himself more of a soldier than a scholar—"though my padres be dead, God bless they graves." Crishad, an eighth grader, could not read a word.

Jasmine had been in special education at one of the Ninth Ward's worst middle schools, a placement that pained her and mystified a retired teacher who now volunteered at the Bayou Black gym. Jasmine, too, had managed to finish a book. "I forgot its name," she said, "but it was about this boy, and his daddy taught him to grow up, like, do you follow the passion or the pay?" Now Jasmine and her friends were putting on white and khaki uniforms and attending school in Terrebonne Parish. By national standards, these institutions were mediocre; for the new students, they were astonishing. "Still can't read yet," Crishad reported excitedly in the third week of September. "But I think I might be coming along." The question, though, was how many new students would be staying. When another storm began to move toward Louisiana, the parish president ordered the gym cleared by the following week.

In the final days, residents who were about to be evicted unearthed a box of T-shirts imprinted with the words "Leadership Breakthrough Mastery." The residents wore them when they prayed for one of the thousands of trailers that the federal government was sending to Louisiana. However, Terrebonne officials, like the leaders of other Louisiana communities, had decided not to make space for those trailers. Even some of Bayou Black's staunch volunteers were reconsidering their hospitable impulses. One night, while the evacuees slept, Gary Harrell mentioned to the daughter of a sugarcane farmer his fear of a Disneyfied reconstruction of New Orleans, with no place for poor blacks to live. "Sounds great," the farmer's daughter replied with unexpected heat. "We can all go to New Orleans, and leave this parish to them."

It was left to Roxie Bergeron, Gary's counterpart on the day shift, to find homes for all the shelter families. "Three

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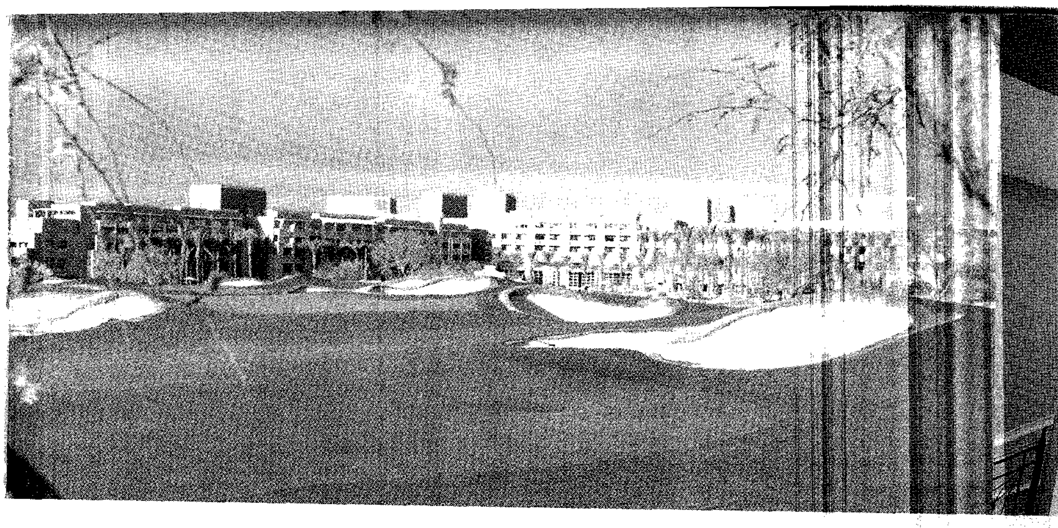

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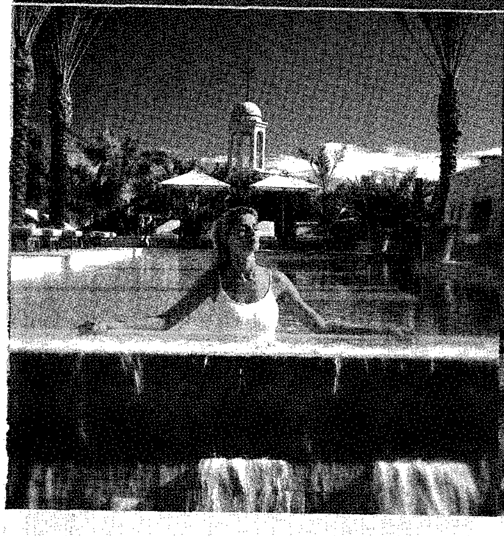

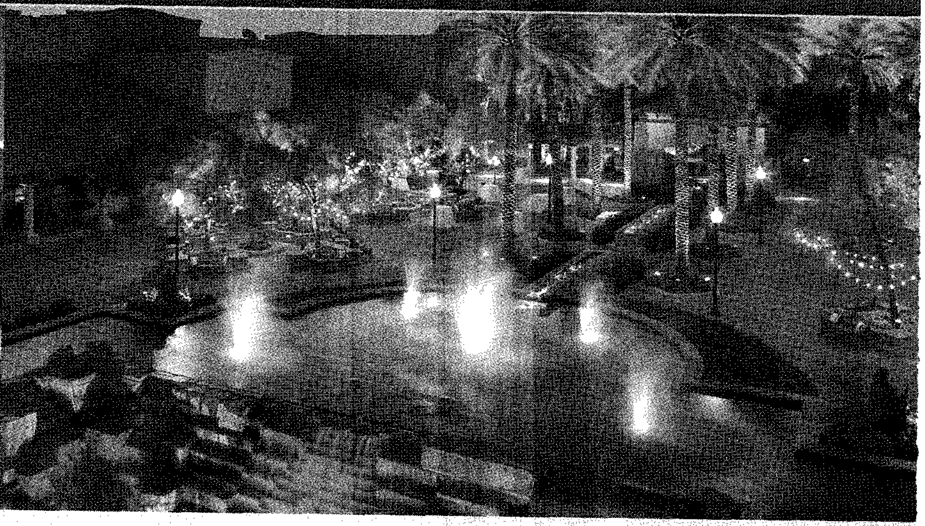

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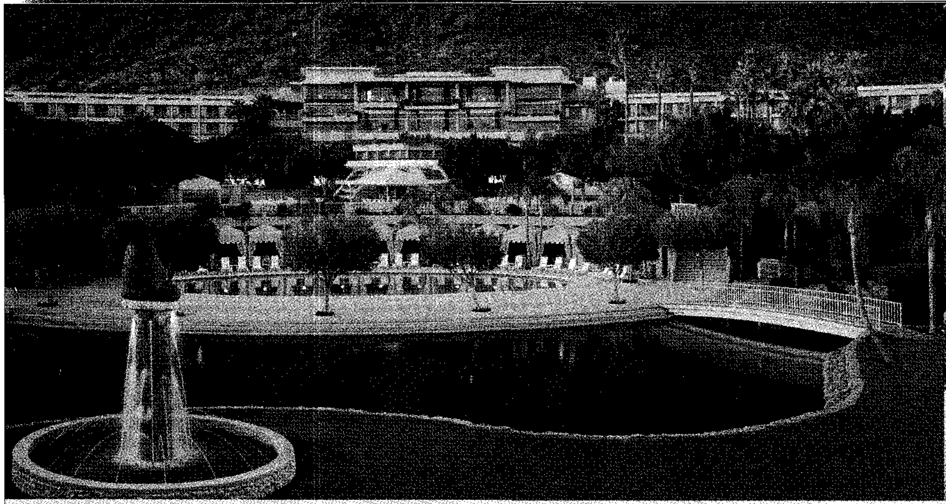

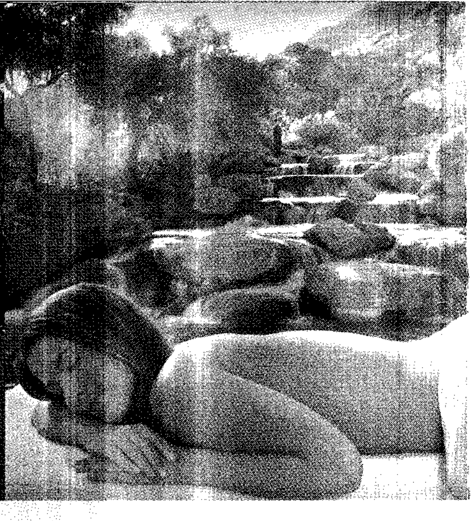

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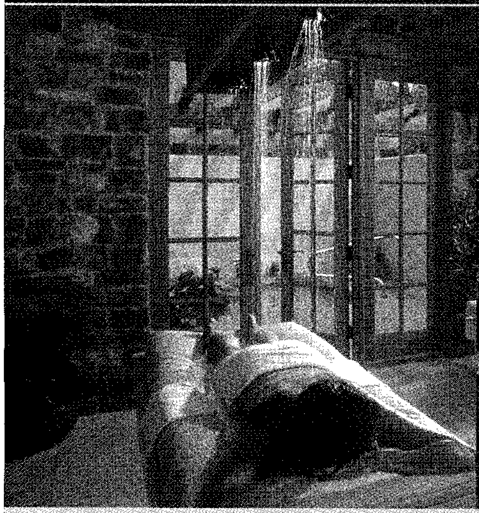

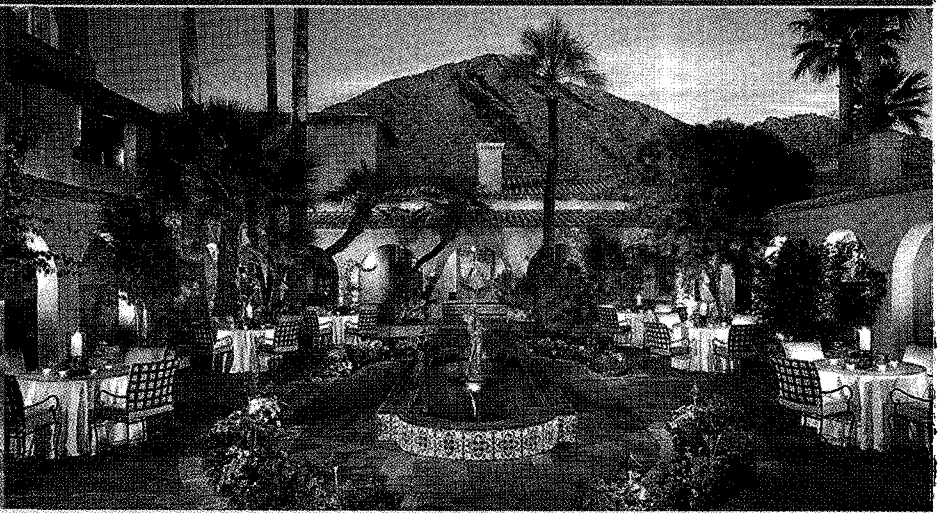

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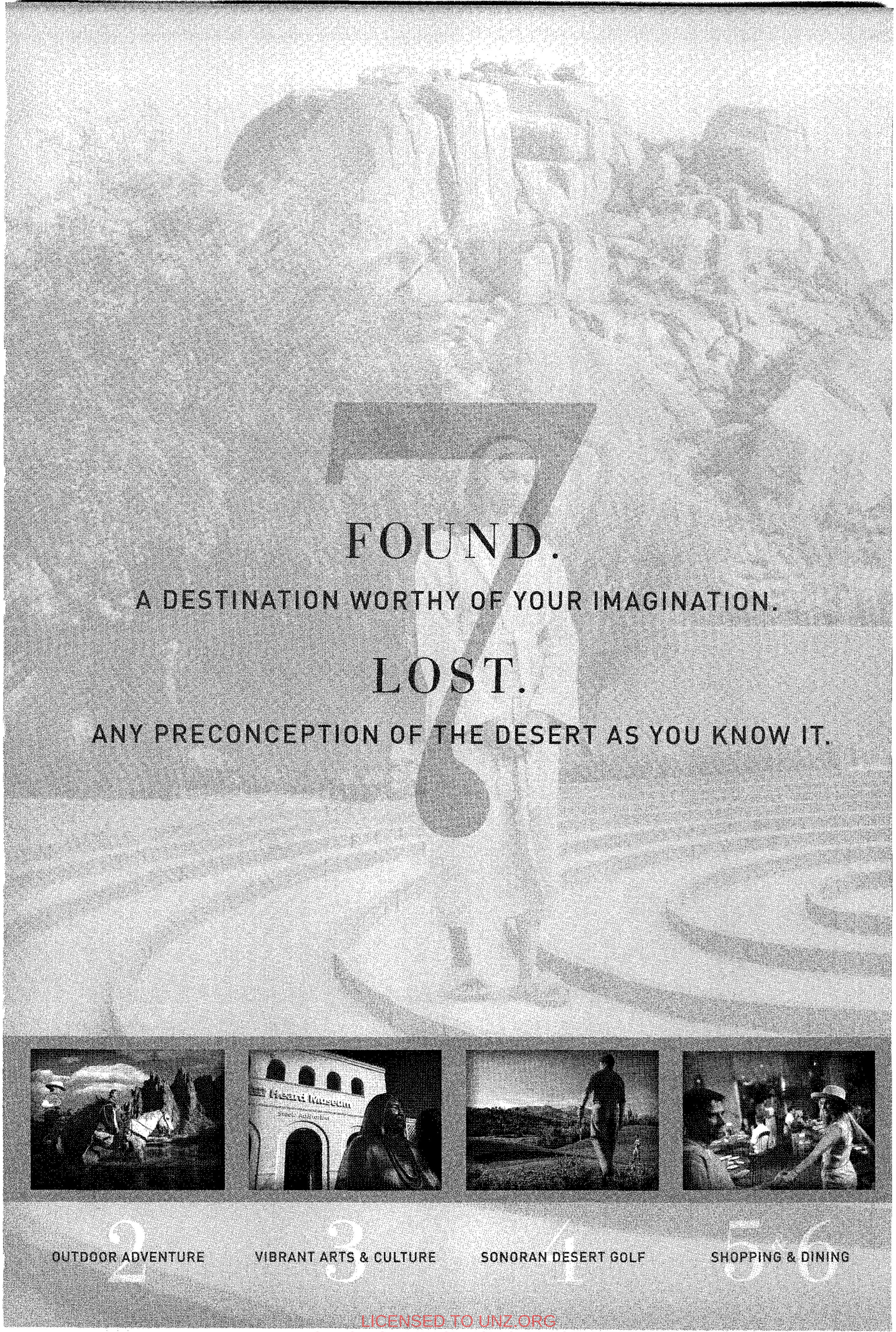

7

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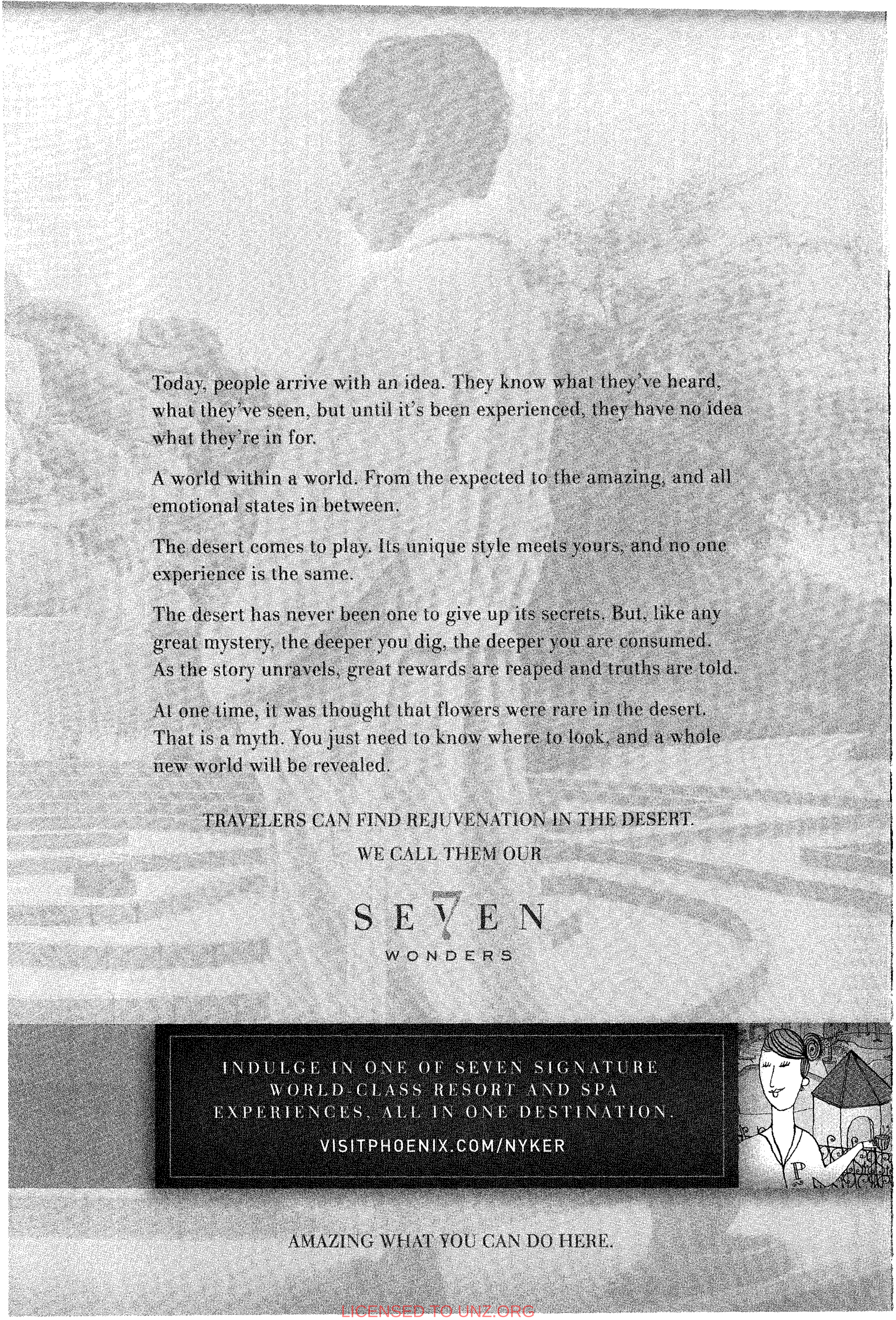
5-6 SHOPPING & DINING



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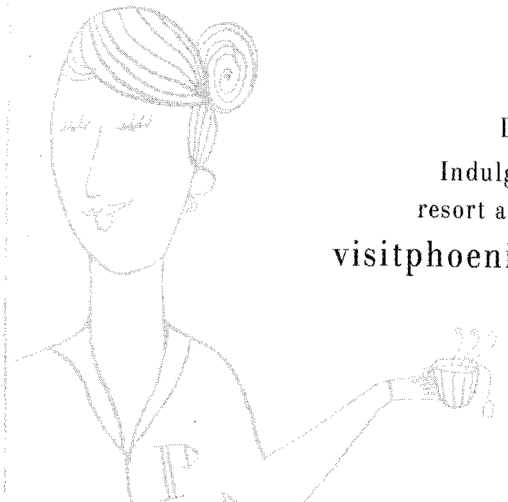

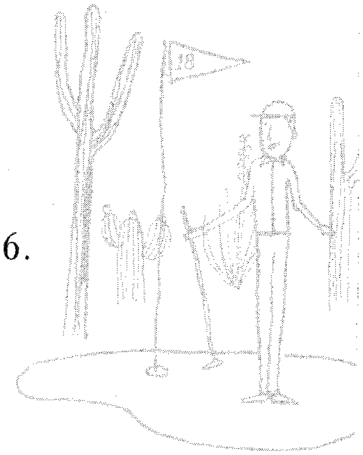

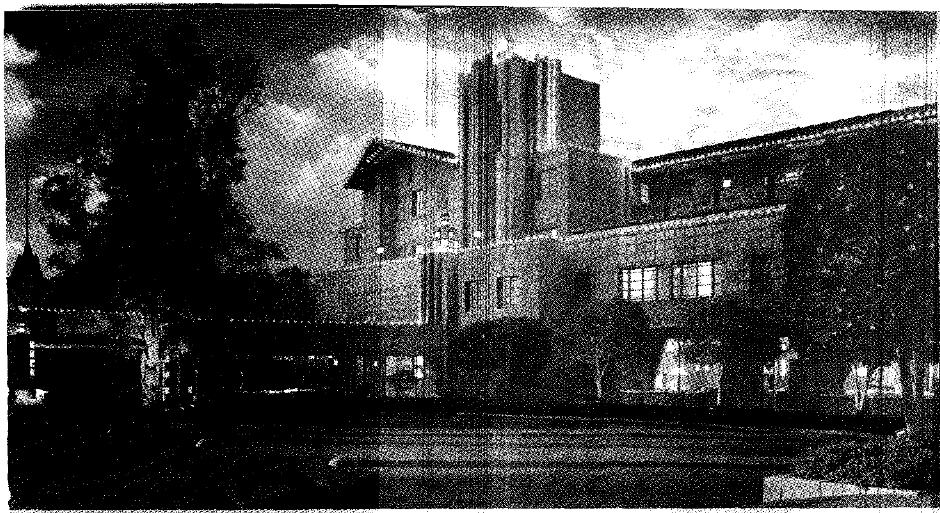

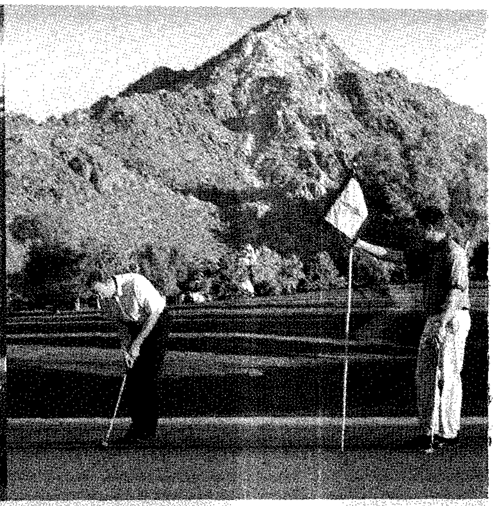

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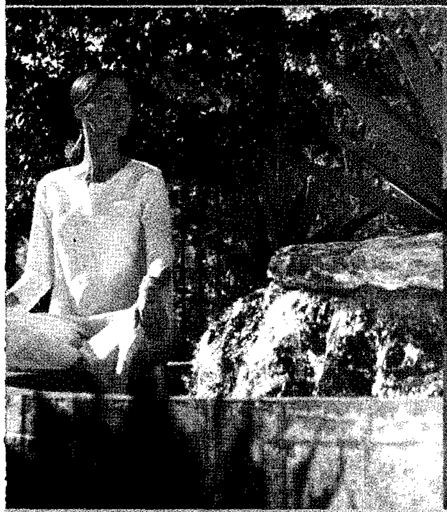

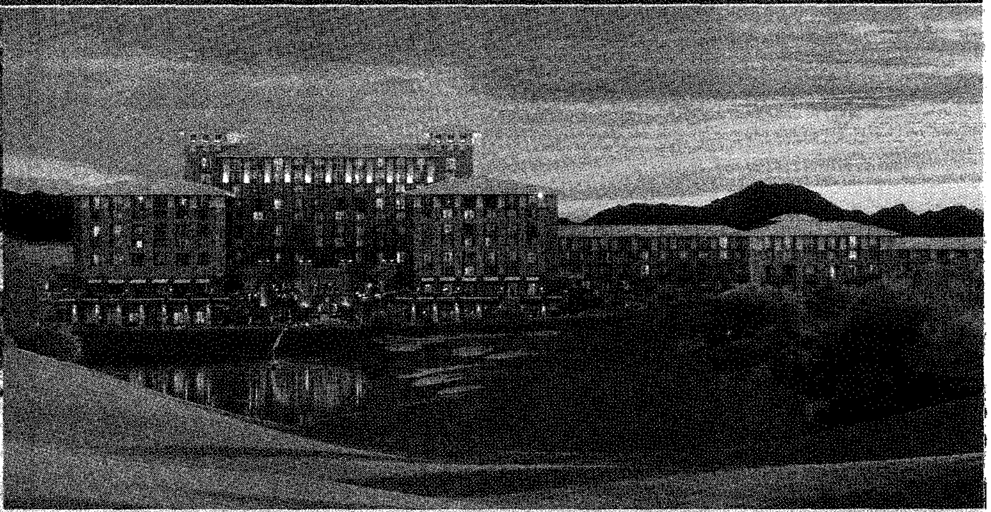

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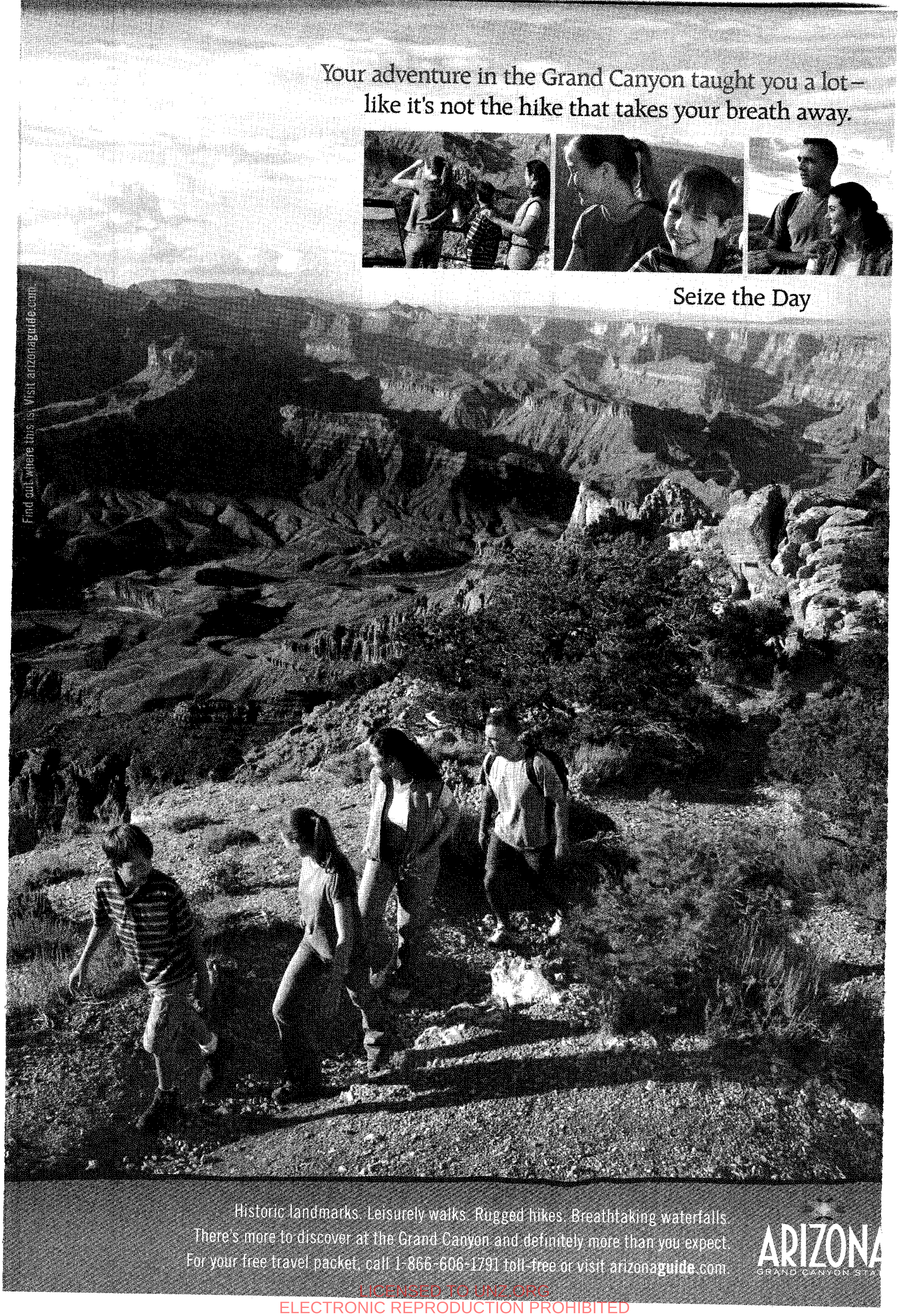
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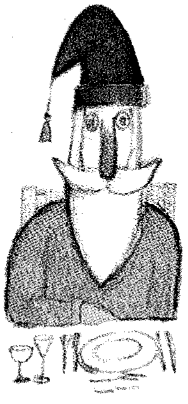
thousand dollars a month?" she said into the phone, sounding incredulous. She called again. "Goodness, I know you have a business to run there, but these children—of course I haven't known them for long but they're extremely well mannered, and if you could waive that extra fee?" By the end of the week, she'd found homes in Terrebonne for seven families. The rest would be moving away. Carolyn and Gus's best offer had come from the American Red Cross: fourteen to twenty-eight days in an extended-stay motel on the industrial outskirts of Rochester, Minnesota.

For Carolyn and Gus, the President's promise to help the evacuees now translated into something specific—a six-hundred-and-twenty-one-dollar voucher for rent. This was welcome, though not perhaps the stuff of transformation. Gus gamely taught his elder son to say "snowmobile," but the idea of moving to a cold, remote area where they had no friends, work, or transportation left him sleepless. Late one night, he paced the porch of the recreation center, holding the younger boy in his arms. "Carolyn and me, we worked and made do on nothing before," he said, "and I expect we can do it again. It's just these boys," he added almost inaudibly. "These are my dreams." Carolyn, for her part, began repeating an idea she'd picked up from the volunteers. "The more help you get in life," she said, "the less successful you'll be."



Just before the shelter closed, Jasmine went into the gym office and asked to use a computer. Her father had agreed to take her in, and the next morning an elderly white couple was going to drive her and Carolyn's family to Minnesota. Jasmine didn't know if Minnesota was north or south of Bayou Black, just as she didn't exactly know when to use words like "thank you" or "goodbye." But she thought that she could learn. A lawyer who had volunteered at the shelter drew up custody papers, which her mother, who was returning to her apartment, readily signed. Before Jasmine left, though, she wanted to draw up a paper of her own.

First, she typed into the computer a fact she thought might impress her mother: that the Mall of America was way bigger than anything that New Orleans had to offer. And then, forehead furrowed, she pecked out what she called her "last commemoration":

> I have a mother and a lil brother that's down here in Bayou Black Gym and that's why I am writing this to dedicate to them that I will always have them in mimory and I will try to keep in touch with them the best way that I can. But I also hope in pray that they never forget about me. I would want my lilbrother to always knoww that I will always be his big sister, and I will want my mother to know I was her baby girl.

Then, using the largest font she could find, she typed the word "love." A few minutes later, she watched as her mother peered into the computer screen, mouth tight, and then looked over the screen to a box of walkie-talkies behind the computer. "Oh, I've been wanting one of these," Jasmine's mother said, pulling one out and examining it intently. "Might be fixing to take it," she said, as she walked out the door.

By mid-November, Carolyn had taken a job in the cafeteria of the Mayo Clinic, in Rochester, while Gus had embarked on an effort to learn to read. From time to time, they wondered how Jasmine was faring in her part of Minnesota. "Hard on that child, her mother sinning her that way," Carolyn said. "But she's a good little girl, mainly, and time can bring a person up, I seen it happen. I don't know. She might grow straight in the end."

"I don't know," Jasmine's father said one day after a meeting with Jasmine's teachers. "She's been living with them ways for fourteen years, and all she knows is a place where dudes gets killed every day and the teachers don't care and the worst racism is just daily life. So she comes to school up here, and she likes it, but people don't understand her because she speaks so backward, and she thinks she has to fight everyone for the littlest things. I try to explain to her what I had to learn myself, that it ain't like that here. It's safe and I'm watching her back and not going to fight her, either—when she gets into it at school, I put her cell phone in the drawer. But it's going to take a while for her to get it, you know, that America's not all hard and mean as what she thinks." ♦

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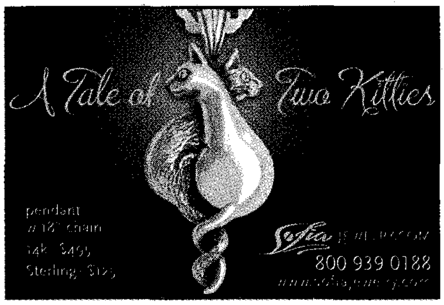
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COLLEGE ESSAY

BY CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

> . . . your entrance essay must not only demonstrate your grasp of grammar and ability to write lucid, structured prose, but also paint a vivid picture of your personality and character, one that compels a busy admissions officer to accept you.
>
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It was a seventeenth-century Englishperson John Donne who wrote, "No man is an island." An excellent statement, but it is also true that "No woman is also an island."

The truth of this was brought home dramatically on September 11, 2001. Despite the fact that I was only twelve at the time, the images of that day will not soon ever be forgotten. Not by me, certainly. Though technically not a New Yorker (since I inhabit northwestern Wisconsin), I felt, as Donne would put it, "Part of the main," as I watched those buildings come down. Coincidentally, this was also the day my young sibling came down with a skin ailment that the doctors have not yet been able to determine what it is. It's not like his skin condition was a direct result of the terrorist attack, but it probably didn't help.

I have a personal connection to the events of that day, for some years ago my uncle by marriage's brother worked in one of the towers. He wasn't working there on 9/11, but the fact that he had been in the building only years before brought the tragedy home to Muskelunge Township.

It is for this reason that I have resolved to devote my life to bringing about harmony among the nations of the world, especially in those nations who appear to dislike us enough to fly planes into our skyscrapers. With better understanding comes, I believe, the desire not to fly planes into each other's skyscrapers.

Also, I would like to work toward finding a cure for mysterious skin ailments. Candidly, I do not know at this point if I would be a pre-med, which indeed would be a good way to begin finding the cure. But I also feel that I could contribute vitally to society even if I were a liberal-arts major, for instance majoring in writing for television.

Many people in the world community, indeed probably most, watch television. Therefore I feel that by writing for TV I could reach them through that powerful medium, and bring to them a higher awareness of such problems as Global Warming, Avian Flu, earthquakes in places like Pakistan, and the tsumani. Also the situation in the White House with respect to Mr. Scooter Liddy. To be precise, I believe that television could play a key role in warning people living on shorelines that they are about to be hit by one humongous wave. While it is true that in northwest Wisconsin we don't have this particular problem, it is also true that I think about it on behalf of people who do. No man is an island. To be sure.

ISTVAN BANYAI

Another element in my desire to devote my life to service to humanity was my parents' divorce. Because I believe that this is valuable preparation for college and, beyond, life. At college, for instance, one is liable to find yourself living in a situation in which people don't get along, especially in bathrooms. Bathrooms are in that sense a microcosm of the macrocosm. Bathrooms also can be a truly dramatic crucible, as the playright Arthur Miller has demonstrated in his dramaturgical magnum opus by that title.

I am not one to say, "Omigod, like poor me," despite the fact that my dad would on numerable occasions drink an entire bottle of raspberry cordial and try to run Mamma over with the combine harvester. That is "Stinkin' Thinkin'." As the Danish composer Frederick Nietzche declared, "That which does not kill me makes me longer." This was certainly true of Mamma, especially after being run over.

Finally, what do I bring to the college experience? As President Kennedy observed in his second inaugural, "Ask not what your country can do to you. Ask, what can you do to your country."

I would bring two things, primarily. First, a positive attitude, despite all this crap I have had to deal with. Secondly, full tuition payment.

While Dad pretty much wiped out the money in the process of running over Mamma—she was in the house at the time—my grandparents say they can pay for my education, and even throw in a little "walking-around money" for the hardworking folks in the admissions department. Grandma says she will give up her heart and arthritis medications, and Grandpa says he will go back to work at the uranium mine in Utah despite the facts that he is eighty-two and legally blind.

In this way, the college won't have to give me scholarship money that could go to some even more disadvantaged applicant, assuming there is one. ♦

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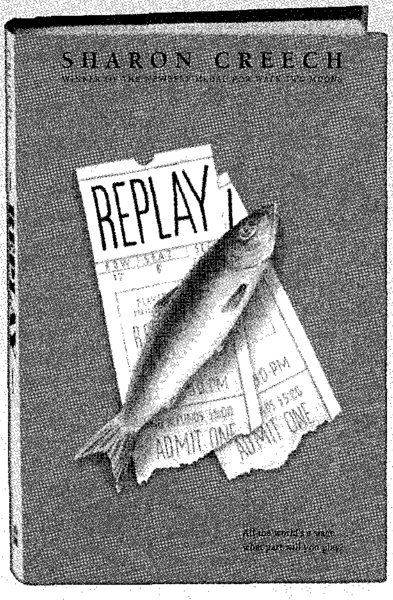
A NEW novel about life, drama, and sardines from Newbery Medal winner Sharon Creech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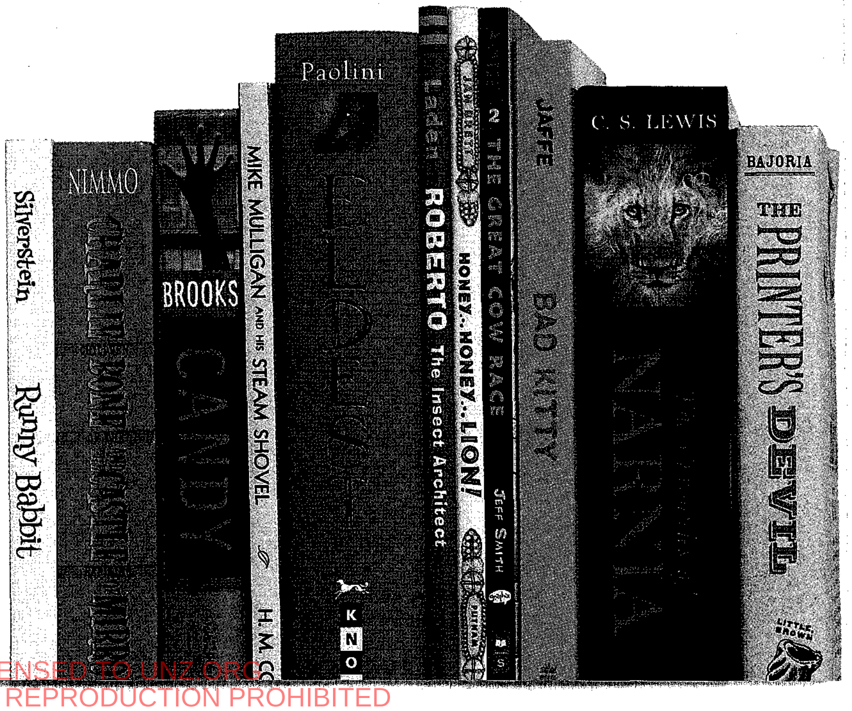
Growing UP

Kids Books Evolve

By Meakin Armstrong

Grandparents read-aloud from "Make Way for Ducklings" or "The Berenstain Bears." Toddlers fondle thick cardboard-bound books, sometimes shaped like cars and trains. A teenaged boy purchases the graphic novel "Bone" at a school fair, while his friends devour fantasy best-seller "Eldest" or recently released teen chick-lit title, "Ready or Not."

Children's publishing is a multi-billion-dollar business that covers a myriad of book titles and products. A four-year-old's interests differ from someone who is eight, while an eight-year-old won't read the same book as someone sixteen. Complicating it further, boys and girls tend to gravitate to different topics. Some children love to read, while others are "reluctant readers."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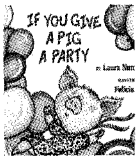
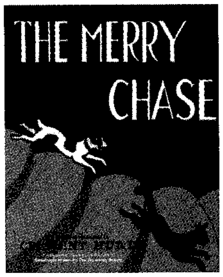
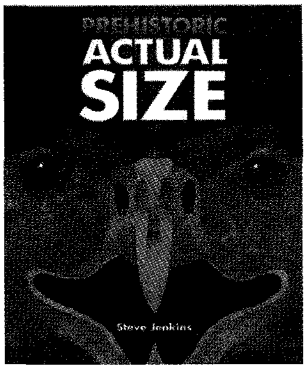




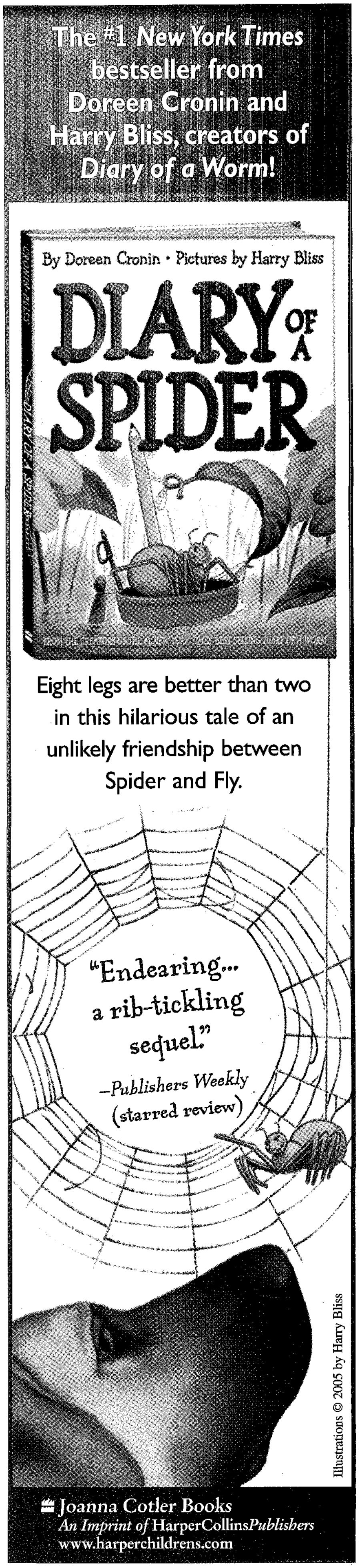


"We're considered a category, but in fact, we're the equivalent of the entire adult market," says Lisa Holton, president of Scholastic's Trade and Book Fairs division. "We have biography and fiction; we deal with babies, we deal with teenagers. It's remarkably varied." Back in the nineteen-sixties and seventies, teachers and librarians ruled children's publishing: whatever they recommended, children tended to read. And even though schools and libraries still account for some thirty-five per cent of the market, today's superstore book chains with their expanded children's sections dominate the landscape. Many claim this has created a larger market overall. However, now that publishers must appeal to the consumer directly, book jackets are much more graphically ambitious, and in-store displays more elaborate.

THE HARRY POTTER EFFECT

Coveted most of all by publishers are so-called repeaters, writers who can regularly produce a best-seller—another J.K. Rowling. Call it the Harry Potter Effect, but children's book publishers also find it appealing when authors are "mediagenic," when their personalities and life stories play well in our sound-bite society.

As with adult publishing, book editors want a successful franchise—or series—because it can guarantee ongoing sales. "Young people want to keep these books forever and line them up on their walls," says Susan Katz, president and publisher of HarperCollins Children's Books. "They also want to be the first to own the latest one." Adds Daisy Kline vice president of marketing for Random House Children's Books: "We always look to collectability for our titles." An additional trend is the growing partnership between publishers and Hollywood. Says Katz of HarperCollins, "A movie can give you a boost of somewhere between three times, all the way to seven times the number of units that you normally sell."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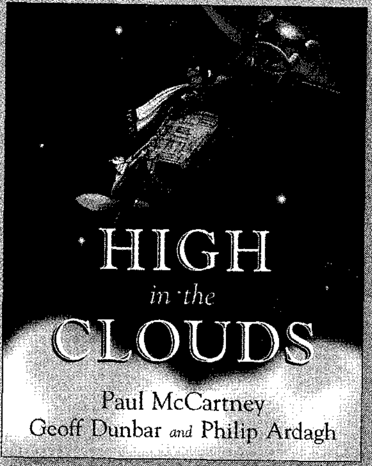
Paul McCartney soars in his first book for children



High in the Clouds is a fast and funny adventure that will delight children of all ages.

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A Series of Unfortunate Events
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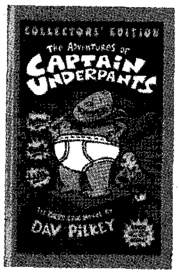
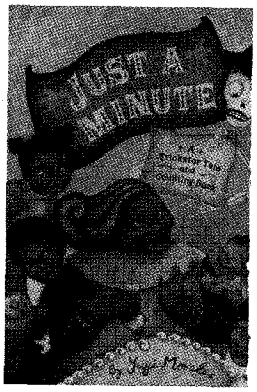
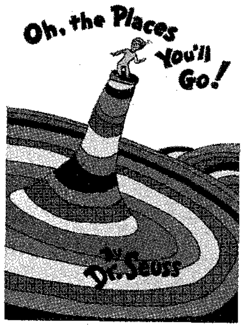
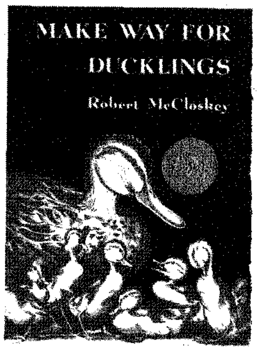








In short, publishing for children is now much the same as it is for adults, but with one key difference: most of those who'll enjoy the story don't actually purchase the books—their so-called gatekeepers do. "We have to make our books as appealing as possible to the ultimate customer, the child," explains Katz. "However, we also know that we've got to appeal to the gatekeepers, because if they don't like it, they're not going to be as excited about buying it."

Given the plethora of books to choose from, how do consumers decide what to purchase? Most tend to buy the ones they grew up with. Classic "Goodnight, Moon,"

PUBLISHERS' PICKS

Beyond the Great Mountains: A Visual Poem About China (Ed Young, Chronicle Books) • With a unique format (the book opens vertically with tiered pages) and gorgeous illustrations, this book conveys the many facets of China.

Can You See What I See? The Night Before Christmas (Walter Wick, Cartwheel Books) • Scenes from Clement C. Moore's "A Visit from St. Nicholas" inspire fascinating photographs where readers search for intriguing hidden objects.

Kamishibai Man (Allen Say, Houghton Mifflin/Walter Lorraine) • After many years of retirement, a retired Japanese storyteller decides to makes his rounds once more, even though the children seem to have forgotten him.

The Last Apprentice: Revenge of the Witch (Joseph Delaney, Greenwillow) • Thomas was an ordinary twelve-year-old until he became apprenticed to a ghost and had to learn how to battle the most evil of all witches on his own.

The Little Engine That Could (Watty Piper, Philomel) • The classic story of the little blue train that carries a trainload of toys over a mountain by telling itself "I think I can, I think I can" has been given a new, fresh look by illustrator Loren Long.

MirrorMask (Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean, HarperCollins Children's Books) • Raised in a family of circus performers, Helena dreams of an ordinary life, until mysterious and haunting music draws her into an even stranger realm.

The Misadventures of Maude March (Audrey Couloumbis, Random House Books For Young Readers) • After they've been orphaned, two whip-smart sisters journey across the Old West. Soon, oldest sister Maude, fifteen, becomes a wanted outlaw.

New York State of Mind (Billy Joel, Scholastic Press) • Billy Joel's familiar lyrics invite readers to tag along as two spirited dogs experience the energy and excitement of The Big Apple.

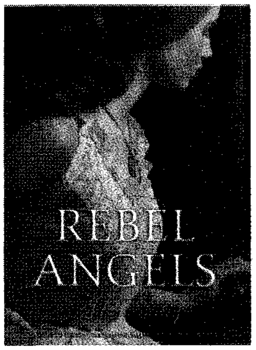
Tickle the Duck! (Ethan Long, Little, Brown) • Children get to touch the duck's soft stomach, his hairy armpit, and rubbery foot. Despite his protests, does the duck really like being tickled after all?

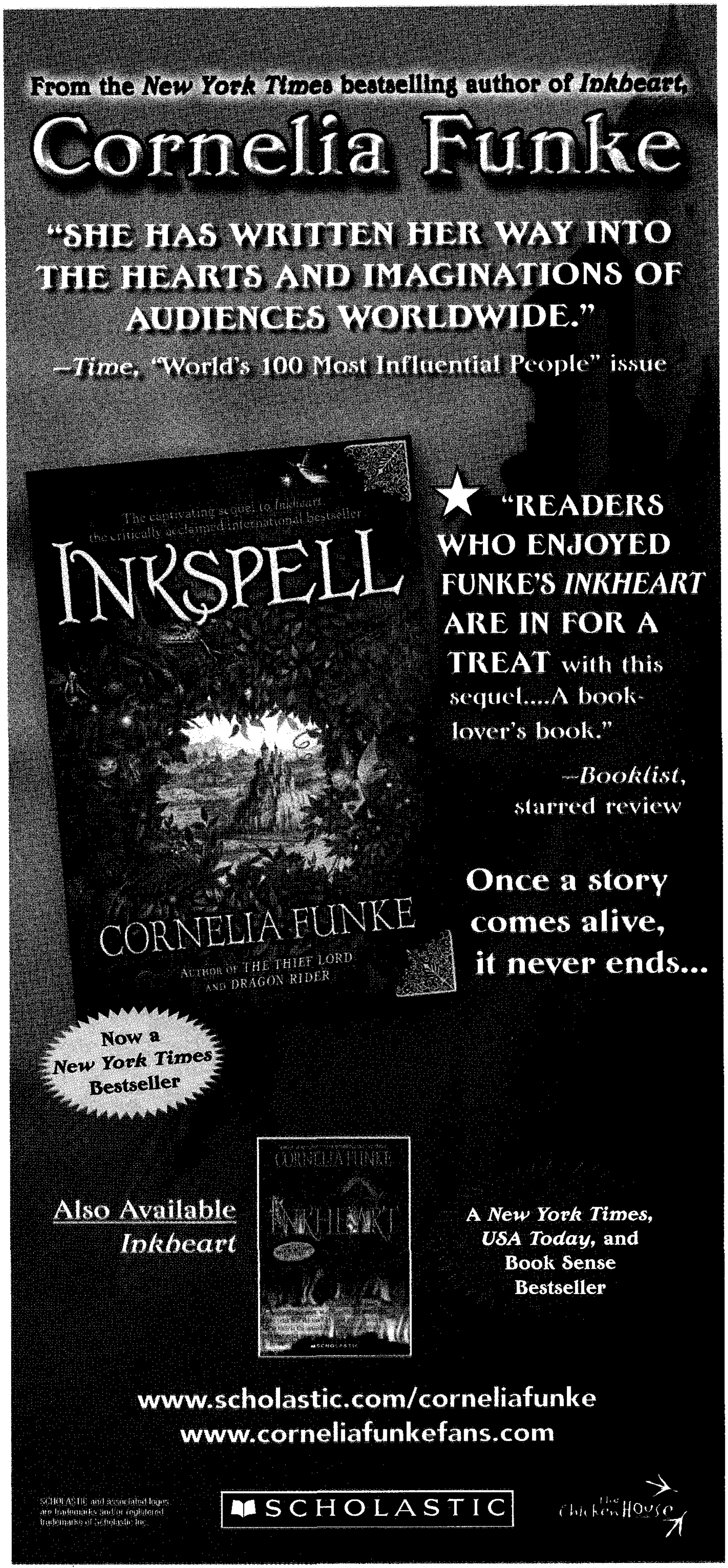
for instance, was published in 1947 but still sells a million copies a year. Additionally, those books awarded Caldecotts or Newbery Medals by the American Library Association are often strong sellers. (Go to ala.org for a list of winners.)

In January, HarperCollins will relaunch its Web site, with a new design feature that recommends books to parents, teachers, librarians, and children. Lisa Holton at Scholastic says her company attracts kids to books through book clubs and festive literary events at school fairs. Events include everything from author visits and read-a-thons, to parties where kids dress up like characters from their favorite books. Scholastic, she says, doesn't "treat books like brussels sprouts." They are instead, "treasures to be discovered, enjoyed, and shared."

LITERARY SLUMBER PARTIES

The Young Adult category is booming. According to Rick Richter, president and publisher of Simon & Schuster Children's

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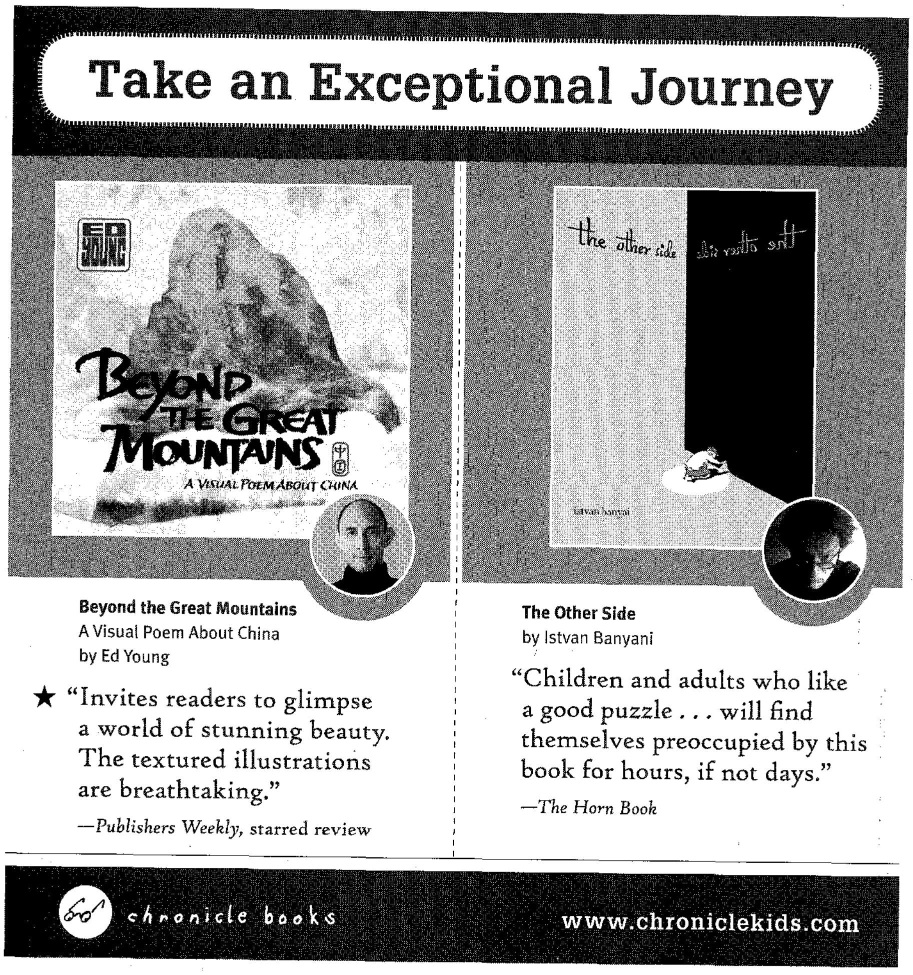
Take an Exceptional Journey

Beyond the Great Mountains
A Visual Poem About China
by Ed Young

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—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

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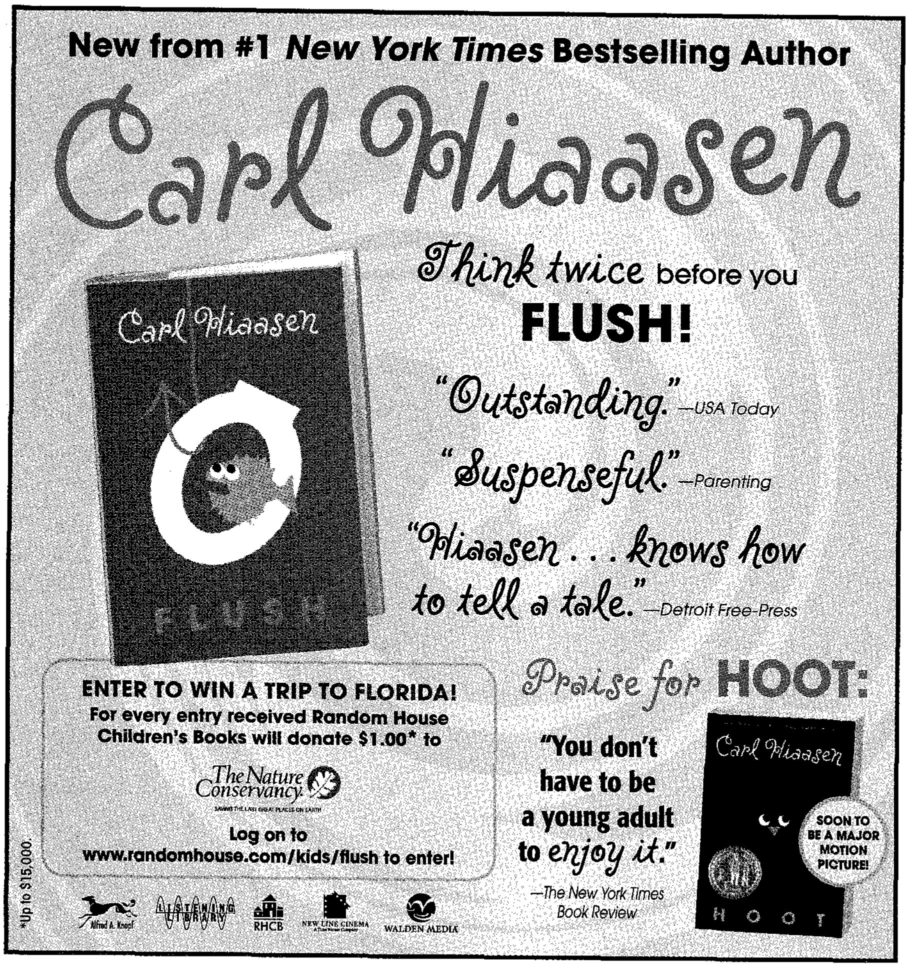
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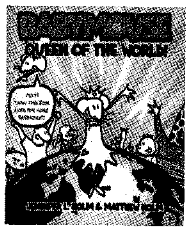
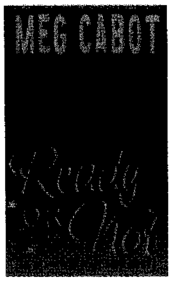
Publishing, it has risen by thirty per cent each year in the last four years. But the teen category is an age range, not a genre. Today, "Go Ask Alice" would likely be a Young Adult title; some say "Catcher in the Rye" would also. Subcategories can include comedic books, fantasy titles, graphic novels, chick-lit, and even controversial titles that address sex frankly. To appeal to this growing readership, some libraries are piping in music to its areas dedicated to teens. Nationwide, others are taking it further, hosting "lock-ins," wherein children and teens spend the night in the library as a sort of literary slumber party. And adult fiction writers are getting into the act. Daisy Kline of Random House points out that authors such as Carl Hiaasen are also now writing children's books.



it's happy bunny
What's Your Sign?
Jim Benton

FANTASY, THE NEW REALITY

Fantasy is the booming subcategory. The "Potter" series (which has reportedly garnered $185 million dollars for Scholastic in the company's 2006 first quarter) has brought new attention to the genre. Parents are seemingly more willing to pay for these


MEG CABOT
Ready or Not

hardcover titles. "Eldest," for example, retails at twenty-one dollars. "Every major publishing house has its fantasy titles," notes Simon and Schuster's Richter. Many, such as Christopher Paolini's "Eldest" have become million-copy national best-sellers, while Philip Pullman's works are also read avidly by adults.

READING ADULTS

Sure, those involved in children's publishing often comment that their work is "fun." Employees might be asked to gather around a conference table to play with and comment upon the latest pop-up book. But according to Richter at Simon & Schuster, most people in the industry are "mission-driven," and want to share the love of reading. The major publishers are involved in nonprofit reading programs such as First Book and Project Cicero. "Studies show that once a child owns a book, they're forty per cent more likely to want to own another," he says. All this leads to hope for book publishers as a whole: young readers will grow up to become reading adults.

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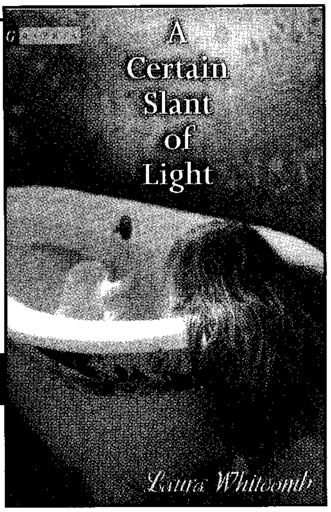
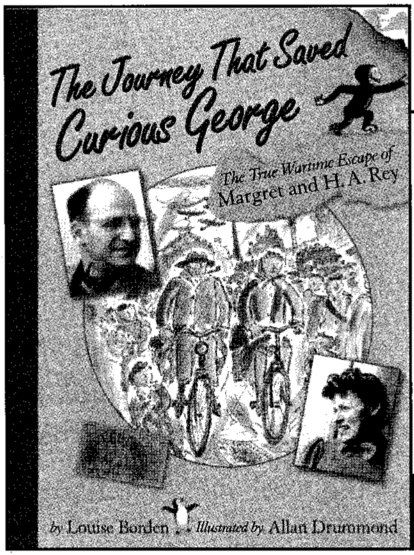

A Certain Slant of Light
Laura Whitcomb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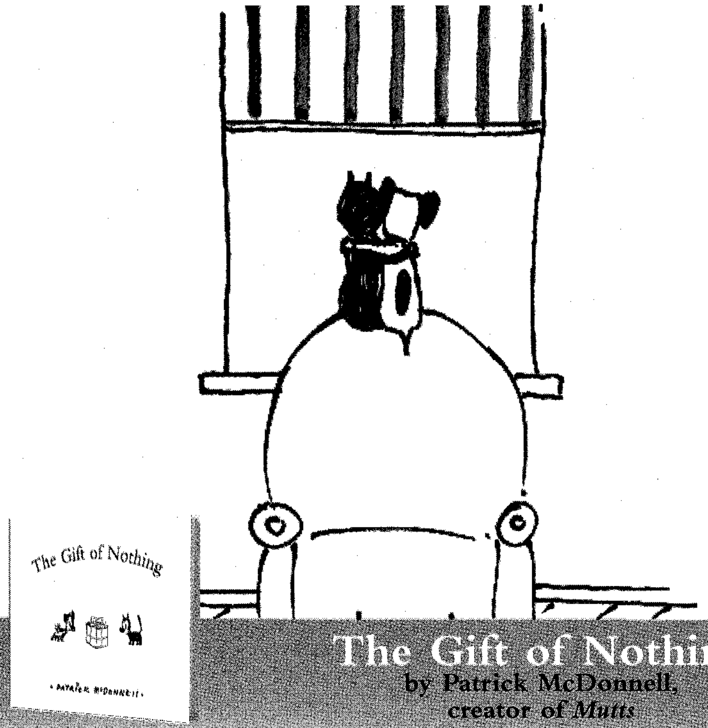
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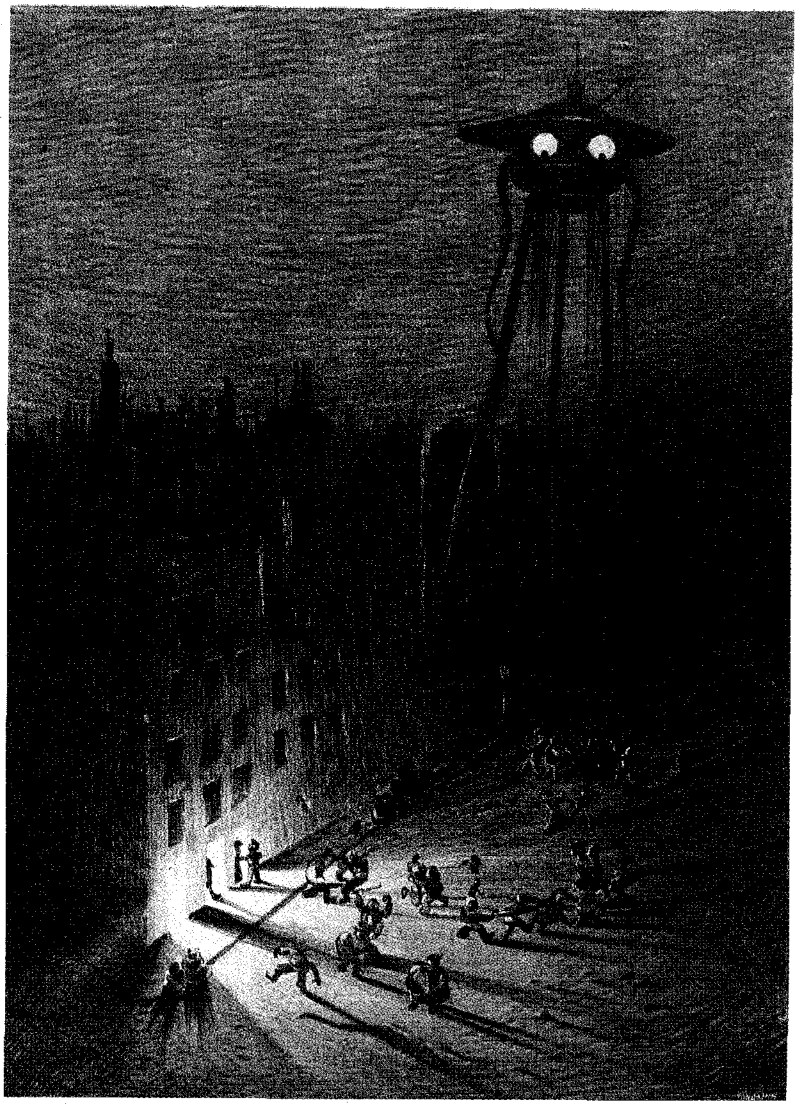
LIFE AND LETTERS

IMAGINING THE WORST

How a literary genre anticipated the modern world.

BY TOM REISS



The foremost exponent of the invasion novel was H.G. Wells's "War of the Worlds."

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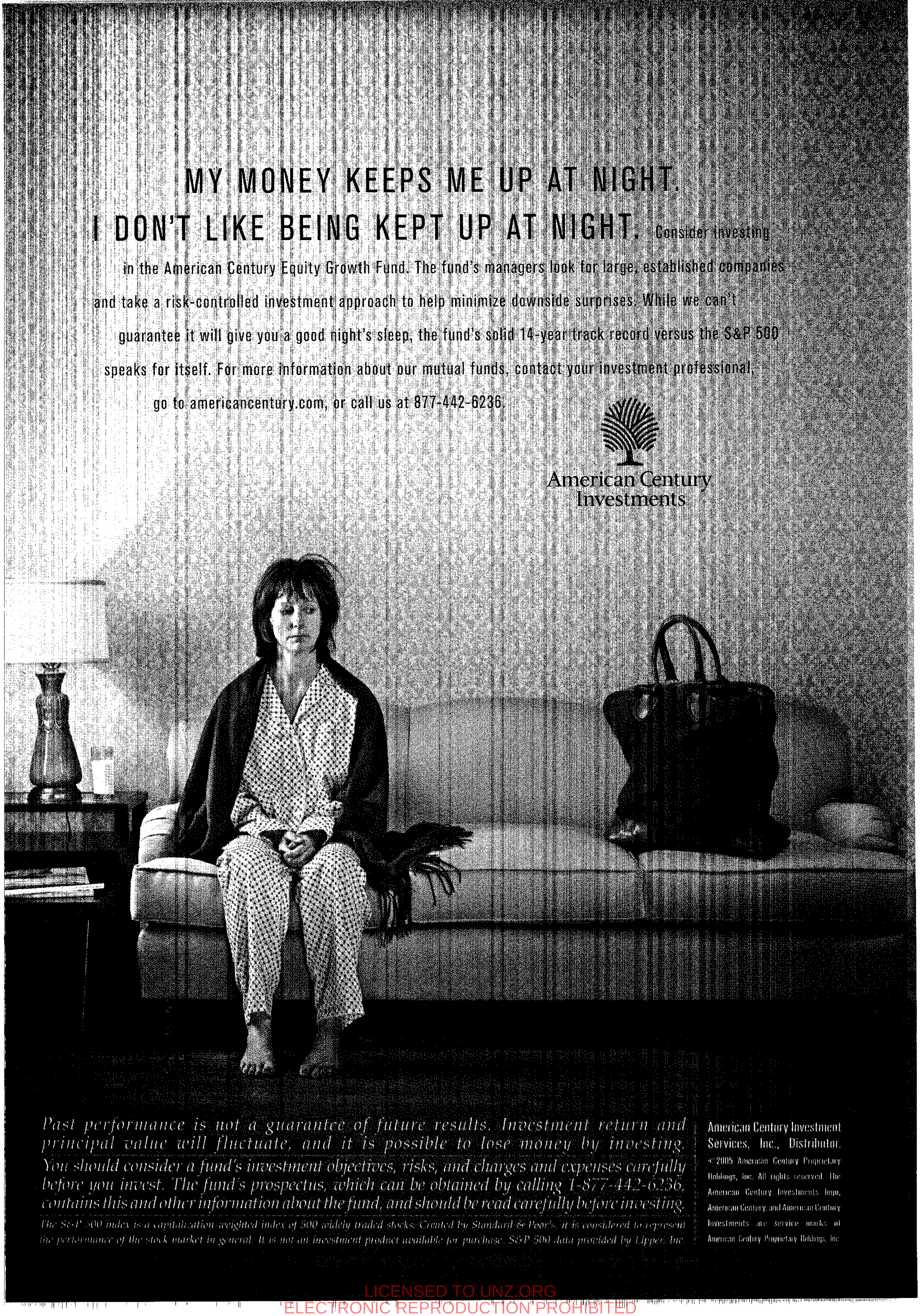
"It was on a Monday that the declaration of war was announced, and in a few hours we got our first inkling of the sort of preparation the enemy had made for the event. . . . People of this country could not bring themselves to believe that what had never occurred before . . . could ever possibly happen." So begins the invasion of England in "The Battle of Dorking," perhaps the most influential short work of British fiction of the nineteenth century. "Everybody is talking about it," the *Spectator* reported in May, 1871, shortly after the story appeared, in *Blackwood's Magazine*, a respected political journal. "And everybody is quite right. We do not know that we ever saw anything better in any magazine. . . . It describes so exactly what we all feel."

The story recounted, from the perspective of an old man living in the nineteen-twenties, an attack on England some fifty years earlier by a force referred to only as "the enemy" or "the Power"—though the occupiers speak German, leaving little doubt about their origins. Ordered to defend the town of Dorking, the narrator and nearly a thousand other civilians—volunteers recruited from offices and private homes—lack rifles and ammunition, and have no way of getting food, news, or supplies. They are shot at by British troops and shelled by the enemy. When the narrator's best friend is fatally wounded by shrapnel, he is taken to his home, near the battlefield, to die. The narrator visits him there, arriving in time to witness his six-year-old godson's death: "He lay at the foot of the stairs on his face, his little arms stretched out . . . a splinter of a shell must have come through the open doorway; it had carried away the back of his head." Half a century later, England remains devastated—"its trade gone, its factories silent, its harbours empty, a prey to pauperism and decay."

The story's author, Lieutenant-Colonel George Tomkyns Chesney, a British officer who had recently returned from India, was not motivated by literary ambition. Like many British observers, he was alarmed by Prussia's successful invasion of France in 1870—the French Army, Europe's largest, had been taken prisoner en masse in less than two months—and he worried that his country could suffer a similar fate. *Blackwood's* was read by many government officials, and Chesney, who had previously contributed articles on military matters, suggested to the editor, John Blackwood, that "a useful way of bringing home to the country the necessity for thorough reorganization [of the army] might be a tale." "The Battle of Dorking" was intended not to entertain but to shock, yet reaction to it showed that to the reading public the two sensations were intertwined. Chesney had accidentally invented the thriller.

Blackwood's reprinted its May issue six times. Then it published Chesney's story as an expensive pamphlet, which sold even faster: a hundred and ten thousand copies by July, continuing at a rate of approximately twenty thousand copies a week through the rest of the summer. Soon "The Battle of Dorking" was available throughout the British Empire, and in most European languages.

"So powerful is the narrative, so intensely real the impression it produces,



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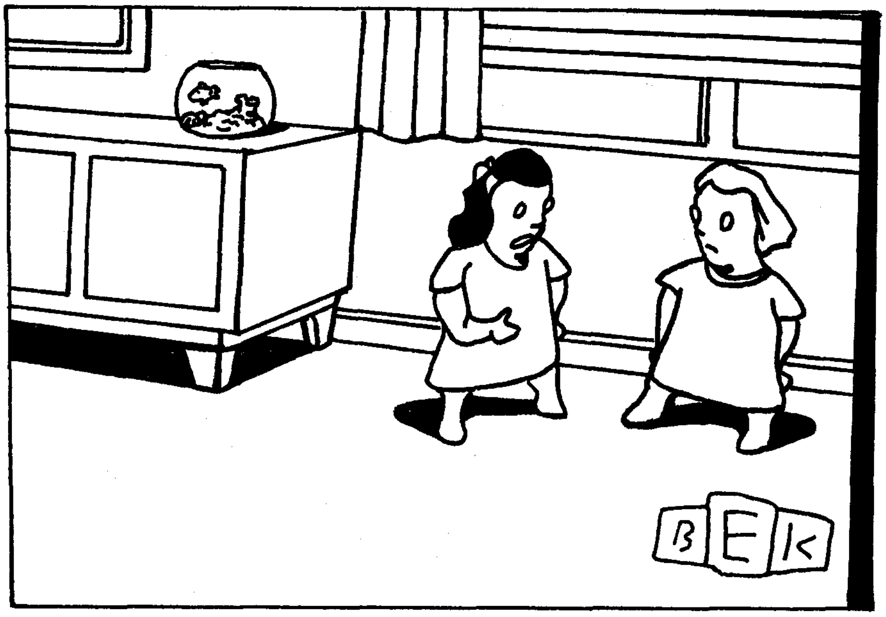
that the coolest disbeliever in panics cannot read it without a flush of annoyance, or close it without the thought that after all, as the world now stands, some such day of humiliation for England is at least possible," a critic for the *Spectator* wrote. In August, Parliament passed a bill calling for the first mass peacetime maneuvers of home troops—a practice Chesney had identified as a key to the invaders' invincibility. By September, British regulars, militia, and volunteers were drilling under the scrutiny of a nation of "Dorking" readers.

Prime Minister William Gladstone worried that "Dorking" was a plot to make his Liberal government, which had opposed military spending increases, look foolish—indeed, there were rumors that the story had been written by his archrival, the Conservative former Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli. On September 2nd, in a speech to the Workingman's Liberal Association, in Yorkshire, Gladstone warned Britons not to make too much of the story: "I should not mind this 'Battle of Dorking' if we could keep it to ourselves, if we could take care that nobody belonging to any other country should know that such follies could find currency or even favour with portions of the British public; but unfortunately these things go abroad, and they make us ridiculous in the eyes of the whole world." By the winter of 1871, Chesney's story had inspired dozens of spoofs, including a song performed in music halls—"John Bull in his sleep one day got talking / And dreamt about a battle fought at Dorking"—and a joke directed at people suffering from minor injuries: "Weren't you wounded at the Battle of Dorking?"

Before Chesney, war in Victorian literature had largely been confined to outposts of the Empire. Chesney's innovation was to bring the battlefield home. "The Battle of Dorking" was designed to arouse readers' anxiety while instructing them in the technical details of urban warfare, and the technique he devised to this end—short, action-filled scenes narrated by an ordinary citizen caught up in momentous events—provided a template for modern entertainment. It also produced a literary craze. Between 1871 and the beginning of the First World War, hundreds of writers followed Chesney's example, and "invasion novels" often topped best-seller lists in Germany, France, and the United States. The foremost exponent of the genre, of course, was H. G. Wells. Reviewing Wells's "War of the Worlds" in 1898, a critic for the London *Times* wrote, "Mr. Wells combines 'The Battle of Dorking,' in realism, with scientific fantasy." Wells's book was faithful to Chesney's blueprint while gently poking fun at it: after a Martian space cylinder lands in the London suburb of Woking, the narrator remarks that "it certainly did not make the sensation that an ultimatum to Germany would have done."



"This fish has forced me to confront all the things I did wrong with my last fish."

The invasion theme persists because it is eminently adaptable to the fears of the moment—terrorism, pandemics, ecological disasters. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, ABC pulled commercials for its new series "Invasion," in which storms, floods, and tornadoes are conduits for alien invasions; the first episode, which features a deadly hurricane hitting the Florida coast, ran in September with a warning about its "sensitive content." (CBS also has an alien-invasion series, "Threshold.") When Wells was writing, invasion novels played on fears of an arms race, militant nationalism, Darwinism, imperialism, and, presciently, a coming "Great War" that would engulf all of Europe. A half century later, invasion movies evoked fears of infiltration by Communists ("Invasion of the Body Snatchers," 1956) and of nuclear war ("Planet of the Apes," 1968).

Pervading these stories is an uneasiness about technological change. According to I. F. Clarke, a British literary scholar who is perhaps the world's sole expert in the genre, the first mini-boom in invasion fiction began in the seventeen-eighties, when the French developed the hot-air balloon. Soon, French poems and plays were depicting hot-air-propelled flying armies destined for England, and an American poem from 1784 warned, "At sea let the British their neighbors defy— / The French shall have frigates to traverse the sky. . . . If the English should venture to sea with their fleet, / A host of balloons in a trice they shall meet." A German story published in 1810, and set in the twenty-first century, describes human populations living in deep underground shelters, with shops and churches, while balloon warfare between Europeans and invading Asian armies rages in the skies above.

Sixty years later, the Prussians proved that technological advances could be decisive when they defeated the French with the aid of long-range, breech-loading artillery, and railroads, which they used for rapid troop deployment. Reports of spike-helmeted Hohenzollerns declaring the new German Reich in the Galerie des Glaces at Versailles suggested that no nation was se-

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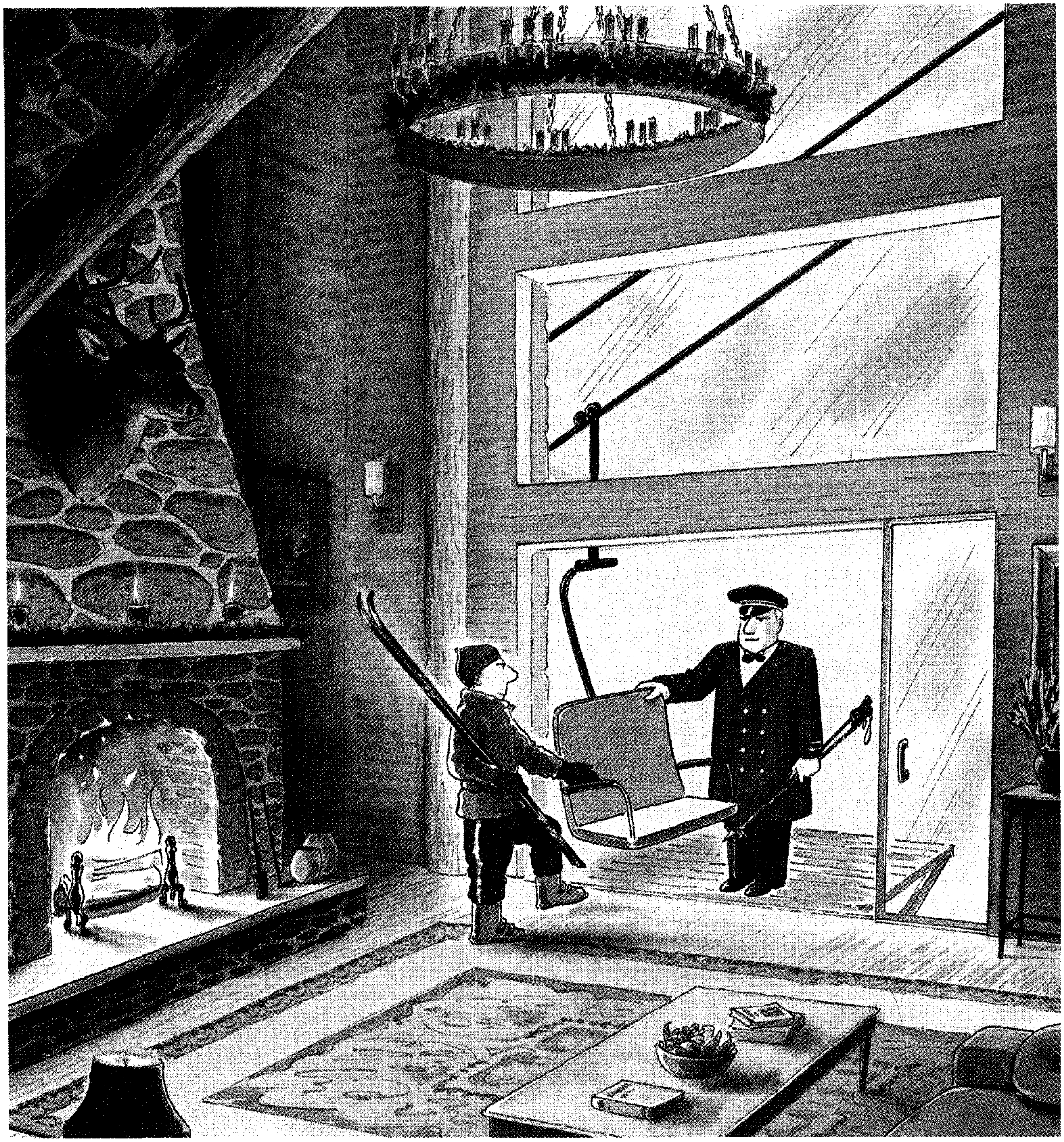

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cure from invasion. While British and American writers exploited the fear of being attacked, their French and German counterparts often depicted scenarios of aggression. In 1940, "The Battle of Dorking" was published in Nazi Germany as "Was England Erwartet!"—"What Awaits England!"

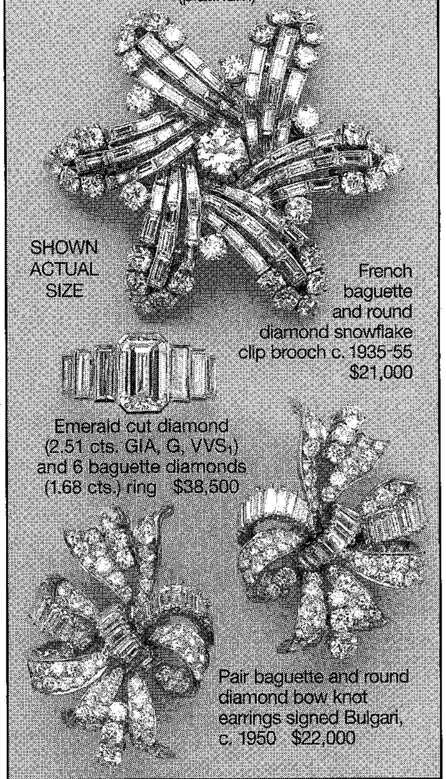
Among Chesney's followers, it became a common practice in their books to make a formal plea to British officials to take invasion fiction seriously. Erskine Childers, in his 1903 novel "The Riddle of the Sands," which is often described as the first work of literary spy fiction, included a nine-page epilogue on the weakness of Britain's coastal defenses. In Childers's novel, two British men thwart an invasion of England when they discover a fleet of German ships massing in the fog in the North Sea. Childers hoped his book would persuade the British government to institute a draft—"Is it not becoming patent that the time has come for training all Englishmen systematically either for the sea or for the rifle?" he asked. But it was a decade before Britain made military service compulsory.

William Le Queux, a lesser writer, had greater political influence. Beginning with his 1894 novel "The Great War in England in 1897," Le Queux published anywhere between one and twelve novels a year until his death, in 1927. His books began as sober Chesneyan portents of impending invasion but quickly spun out across the globe in fantastic plotlines that took his heroes from San Francisco to Siberia. Ian Fleming's character James Bond may have been inspired by Le Queux's agent Duckworth Drew, a member of the British government's "Confidential Department," who shares Bond's taste for custom cigarettes and cocktails.

Le Queux's main publisher was Alfred Harmsworth, Lord Northcliffe, the Rupert Murdoch of the Edwardian era, who built the first great tabloid empire, in part on the strength of serialized invasion stories. One of Harmsworth's gimmicks was to instruct his writers to have their invading Germans—or French or Russians—storm through the English cities and towns where he wanted to increase his circulation figures. Le Queux was his most lucrative discovery, and in 1905 Harmsworth commissioned him to write an invasion story for the *Daily Mail*, England's best-selling newspaper. The project was assembled a bit the way a blockbuster movie is today, with Harmsworth in the role of producer, managing a kind of invasion-fiction dream team, which, in addition to Le Queux, consisted of H. W. Wilson, the *Daily Mail's* naval expert, and Field Marshal Lord Roberts, a former Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, who was hired to consult on military strategy.

The first chapter of "The Invasion of 1910," which strung out the standard German-invasion plot across hundreds of pages of lurid prose—"the wild, turbulent crowd surging through the City . . . as the blood-red sun sank into the west . . . a light in the sky that was prophetic of red ruin and of death to those wildly excited millions"—was published on March 20, 1906, and additional installments appeared every day for fifteen weeks. Subsequently published as a book, "The Invasion of 1910" was translated into twenty-seven languages, including Arabic, Japanese, and Chinese, and sold more than a million copies. Despite the fact that it describes German troops shooting down women and forcing Londoners to dig their own graves in front of firing squads, the book was also a popular success in Germany, where it featured a different ending, in which the Fatherland wins and offers magnanimous peace terms.

Le Queux was the Queen's favorite novelist, a fact that did not prevent the Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, from denouncing "The Invasion of 1910" just as Gladstone had Chesney's story thirty-five years earlier. Campbell-Bannerman complained that Le Queux's novel was "calculated to inflame public opinion abroad and alarm the more ignorant public at home." Foreign-policy experts argued that Le Queux and other invasion writers risked inciting a war. "Among all the causes contributing to the continuance of a state of bad blood between England and Germany," wrote the journalist Charles Lowe, in the January, 1910, issue of *Contemporary Review*, "perhaps the most potent is the baneful industry of those unscrupulous writers who are forever asserting that the Ger-



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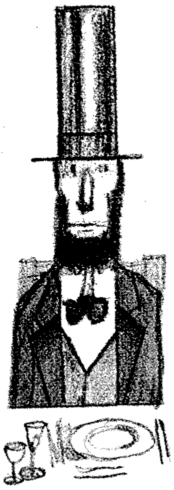
mans are only awaiting a fitting opportunity to attack us in our island home and burst us up."

The outcry inspired P. G. Wodehouse to write an invasion novel of his own: "The Swoop! or, How Clarence Saved England." In Wodehouse's spoof, a multicultural force—Germans, Russians, Chinese, Turks, the Swiss navy, the army of Monaco, an obscure African tribe, an army of Moroccan brigands, and a horde of Arabs led by the Mad Mullah of Somaliland—descends on Britain: "No fewer than eight . . . hostile armies had, by some remarkable coincidence, hit on that identical moment for launching their long-prepared blow." The Germans land in Essex, the Russians at Yarmouth, the Mad Mullah at Portsmouth, and the Chinese at the picturesque Welsh village of Lllgxtplll. ("The Chinese . . . lost their way near Llanfairpwlgwnngogogoch," Wodehouse writes, "having been unable to understand the voluble directions given to them by the various shepherds they encountered.")

By the time Wodehouse's book was published, in 1909, much of the British public and, more important, many members of the military had become convinced that England was rife with German spies, a notion that led to the creation of the domestic intelligence service MI5. "The Invasion of 1910" described an elaborate system of "fixed agents" who had infiltrated English communities, befriending and marrying locals while receiving periodic visits from "traveling agents," bearing orders and money. According to Le Queux, these spies would cripple infrastructure, poison water supplies, and blow up bridges, buses, and subways. He described their bomb and weapons caches, and explained that many of them worked undercover as hairdressers and waiters, an assertion that led the *Quarterly Review* to claim, in July, 1908, that there were fifty thousand German waiters in England, who gave Germany "such an intelligence system as no other country has ever maintained upon the territory of another."



Before the *Weekly News* serialized Le Queux's "Spies of the Kaiser," in 1909, the magazine appointed a "spy editor" to handle mail from readers and printed an announcement encouraging them to report suspicious activity to the magazine:

> Have Our Readers Met Any Spies?
>
> If so, we should like to have information as to what they were doing, what was their nationality, and what occupation they followed in Britain.
>
> Readers may have discovered some of these spies at work, and may have had adventures with them, may have seen the photographs, charts, and plans they are preparing.

That March, the Secretary of State for War, R. B. Haldane, convened a subcommittee of the Committee of Imperial Defence to investigate the problem of foreign spies on English soil. What was known about the sixty-six thousand German agents scattered in the Home Counties? Was it true that they maintained a secret arms dump near Charing Cross Station? What about the strangers who had been seen sketching the neighborhood of Epping for the past two years? These rumors had originated with Le Queux. The subcommittee's chief witness was James Edmonds, a British Army colonel and friend of Le Queux, who oversaw a small "counter-espionage" effort in the War Office devoted to collecting news about spies and invasion plots, most of which came from novels and newspaper reports—and, of course, from his lunches with Le Queux. The novelist supplied Edmonds with the "information" he needed to argue before the subcommittee about the need for a domestic intelligence service. (Many of the alleged encounters with spies described in the subcommittee's notes are attributed to "a well-known author.") Three months later, the subcommittee authorized the creation of the British Secret Service.

The Army was given responsibility for domestic intelligence, which became MI5; the Navy was put in charge of a new foreign espionage service, which became MI6. (This is why James Bond is sometimes referred to as Commander Bond and occasionally wears a naval uniform.) However, the new Secret Service devoted its resources not to pursuing spies but, rather, to establishing a vast, J. Edgar Hoover-like card-file register of "suspicious reports"—essentially the institutionalization of Le Queux's publicity stunts. Over the next several years, Scotland Yard's Special Branch investigated more than eight thousand suspicious aliens, but in September, 1914, the agency issued a report declaring that it had found no evidence of bomb plots or "of any kind of military organization" in Britain. By 1917, MI5 held dossiers on more than thirty-eight thousand individuals, and at the end of the war it employed a staff of three hundred and twenty-five clerks, simply to maintain the card-filing system.

It is a measure of the increasing clout of invasion fiction that in 1914, when Arthur Conan Doyle published "Danger," a short story warning that German submarines posed a lethal threat to British civilian ships, a number of British admirals publicly contested his claims. The story appeared in *Strand Magazine*, accompanied by a two-page illustration showing a torpedoed ocean liner going down. The narrator, a U-boat commander—who went on to become a stock character in modern British thrillers—describes sinking dozens of ships, both military and civilian. "I do not myself think that any civilized nation will torpedo unarmed and defenseless merchant ships," one of the admirals wrote. Another wrote, "No nation would permit it, and the officer who did it would be shot." Two months after the story was published, German U-boats off the Atlantic coast began attacking British boats, including passenger ships. The following spring, the Lusitania was torpedoed off Ireland's southern coast, killing eleven hundred and ninety-eight civilians.

For insight into the world's military and political future, however, few invasion writers compare with H. G. Wells. He wrote three invasion novels: "War of the Worlds," in 1897; "The War in the Air," in 1908; and "The World Set Free," in 1914. Some saw in Steven Spielberg's version of "War of the Worlds" an allegory of September 11th, but "The War in the Air" actually describes the destruction, by a surprise air attack, of Manhattan. (In fact, the novel roughly sketches the geopolitics of the Second World

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BUCKLE UP

"Hey, it's not a race."

War: the Japanese rule the Pacific while the Germans, led by a charismatic figure, half Napoleon, half "Nietzsche's Overman revealed," conquer Europe.)

Wells's most disturbing invasion novel, however, was "The World Set Free," in which the world's major powers attack each other simultaneously. In the second chapter, Wells provides a detailed description of the atomic bomb, which would not be invented for another thirty-one years, and what remains one of the most vivid evocations of a full-scale nuclear war.

When the book appeared, no physicist thought that an artificially induced chain reaction—which Wells called "the disease of matter"—was possible. Wells based the science in his story on research by the British physicists Frederick Soddy and Ernest Rutherford, both of whom dismissed the idea. (Rutherford called it "moonshine.") In 1932, however, Leo Szilard, a Hungarian physicist working at the Institute of Theoretical Physics, in Berlin, read the novel in a German translation. The following year, while on a walk in London, Szilard had an epiphany in which he conceived how a nuclear weapon might actually be built. He subsequently sent the first chapter of Wells's book to Sir Hugo Hirst, the founder of British General Electric, accompanied by a letter in which he wrote, "The forecast of the writers may prove to be more accurate than the forecast of the scientists. The physicists have conclusive arguments as to why we cannot create at present new sources of energy. . . . I am not so sure whether they do not miss the point."

There are dozens of characters in "The World Set Free," and most die horribly, from bombing, radiation sickness, or starvation, as soon as we get to know them. The book's main character is the nuclear chain reaction itself: a phenomenon portrayed in such intimate and creepy detail that it seems almost like a living thing. The presence of princes, earls, and dukes in European war rooms and at the controls of bomb-loaded planes—reminding us that this is a 1914 invasion fantasy, written before the Battles of Verdun and the Somme—adds to the feeling of uncanniness. Here is the description of a German atomic bomb landing on Paris, as recounted by a secretary in the French government's war control room near the Eiffel Tower:

> The sound struck her like a blow. . . .
>
> She felt torn out of the world. There was nothing else in the world but a crimson-purple glare and sound, deafening, all-embracing, continuing sound. . . .
>
> She was not clear whether it was night or day nor where she was; she made a second effort, wincing and groaning, and turned over and got into a sitting position and looked about her.
>
> Everything seemed very silent. She was, in fact, in the midst of a vast uproar, but she did not realize this because her hearing had been destroyed.
>
> At first she could not join on what she saw to any previous experience.
>
> She seemed to be in a strange world, a soundless, ruinous world, a world of heaped broken things. And it was lit—and somehow this was more familiar to her mind than any other fact about her—by a flickering, purplish-crimson light.

The last part of the book takes place in a post-apocalyptic wasteland, where "the flimsy fabric of the world's credit had vanished, industry was completely disorganized. . . . Most of the capital cities of the world were burning; millions of people had already perished, and over great areas government was at an end."

Wells contrives a happy ending, for it is only after this cataclysm that nations at last agree to form a world government and put an end to war. (In the nineteen-fifties, inspired by Wells's book, Szilard, Einstein, and Bertrand Russell began organizing international conferences for scientists concerned about nuclear proliferation.) But more affecting than Wells's conclusion is his lament, toward the beginning of the novel, for the now destroyed world, which could have prevented catastrophe but chose not to:

> Certainly it seems now that nothing could have been more obvious to the people of the earlier twentieth century than the rapidity with which war was becoming impossible. And as certainly they did not see it. They did not see it until the atomic bombs burst in their fumbling hands. Yet the broad facts must have glared upon any intelligent mind. All through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the amount of energy that men were able to command was continually increasing. Applied to warfare that meant that the power to inflict a blow, the power to destroy, was continually increasing. There was no increase whatever in the ability to escape. Every sort of passive defence, armour, fortifications, and so forth, was being outmastered by this tremendous increase on the destructive side. Destruction was becoming so facile that any little body of malcontents could use it; it was revolutionizing the problems of police and internal rule. Before the last war began it was a matter of common knowledge that a man could carry about in a handbag an amount of latent energy sufficient to wreck half a city. These facts were before the minds of everybody; the children in the streets knew them. And yet the world still, as the Americans used to phrase it, "fooled around" with the paraphernalia and pretensions of war. ♦

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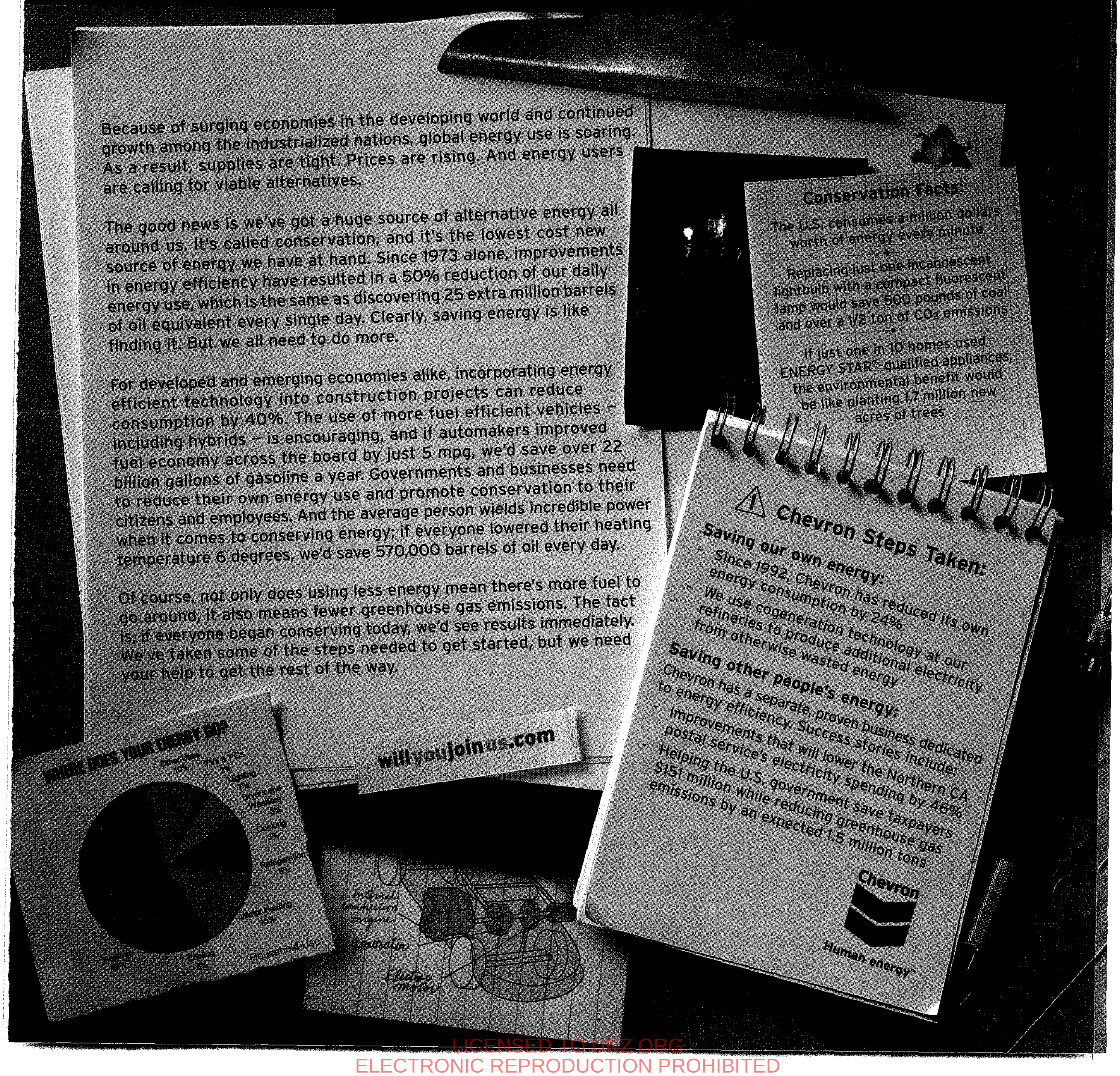

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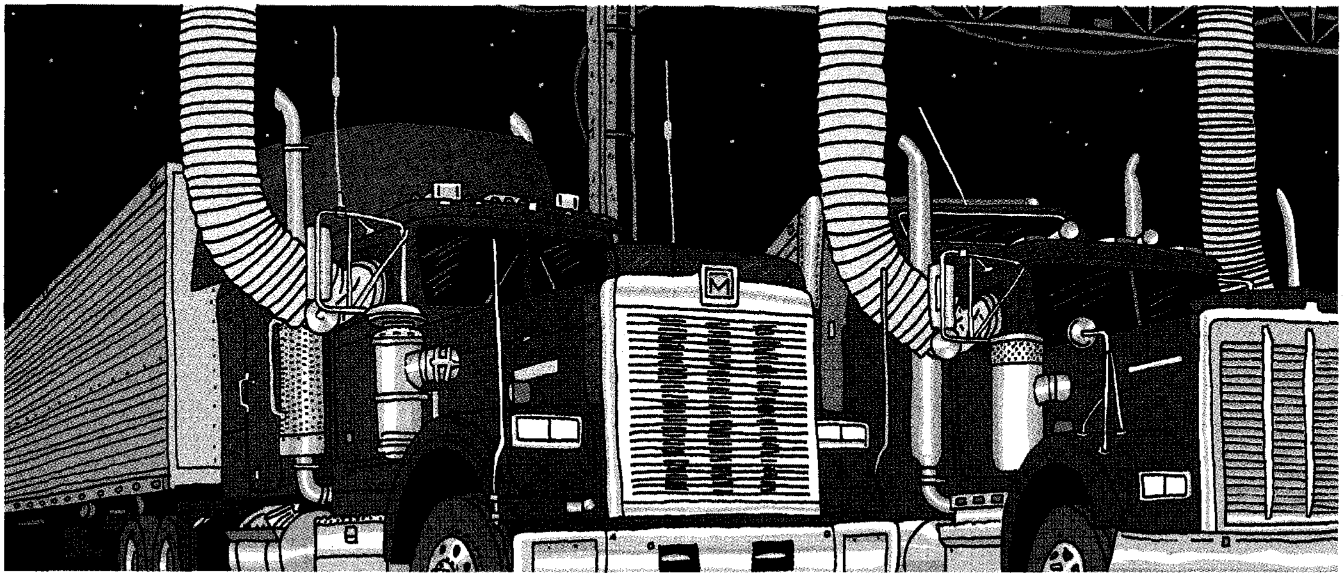
LAND OF THE DIESEL BEAR

Back on the interstate in a silver tanker.

BY JOHN McPHEE

If you have crossed the American continent in the world's most beautiful truck, you prefer not to leave it forever. You think of it from time to time—stainless, flashing like a signal mirror in the Carolinas, in California, in Wisconsin, Wyoming, Oregon, and Georgia—and you want to climb back into the cab. Exactly thirty-six months after I said goodbye to Don Ainsworth and watched his chemical tanker as it slowly pulled away from the Port of Tacoma Truck Stop ("A Fleet of One," *The New Yorker*, February 17 & 24, 2003), I got back into his cab. While he was making a round trip between San Diego and Dudley, Massachusetts, I connected with him in Rochester for an eastbound-and-westbound seven-hundred-and-fifty-mile reunion with the truck.



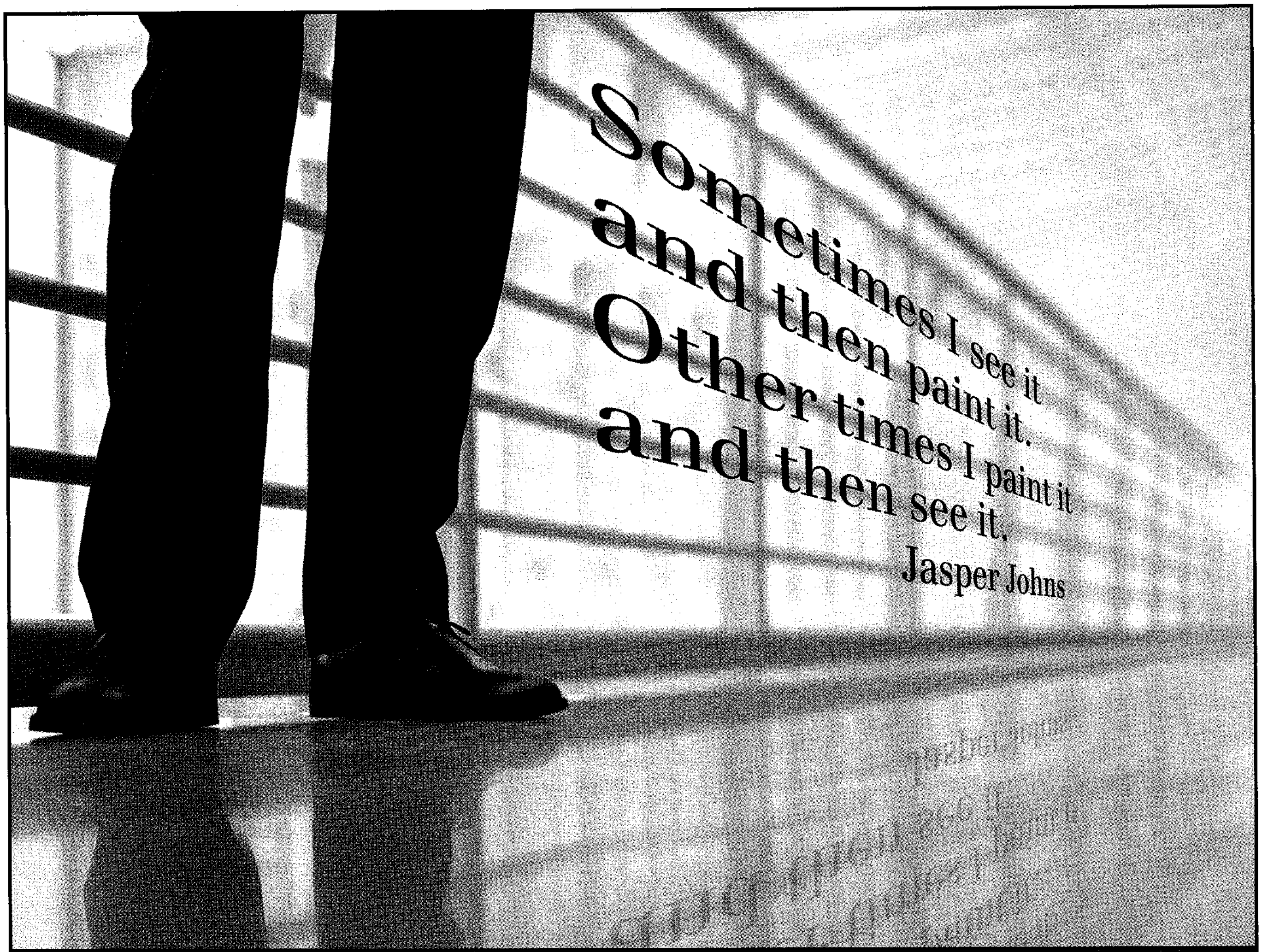
Creature comfort: The hum of a truck stop in the dead of night is one of the sonic emblems of America.

PETER ARKLE

The driver of an eighteen-wheel, eighty-thousand-pound chemical tanker needs to be thinking ahead at least a mile, of course, but if he happens to own the whole rig—the tractor and the trailer—he is also thinking through itineraries for long-haul routes in which the smartest distance to profit is not necessarily a straight line. And always, in various ways, he is listening to and looking for bears. When I noticed a police car deep in a median like a beetle under a leaf, I mentioned it to Don, and he said, "I saw him a long time ago. He's on the phone, talking to his mistress." Skirting and crossing the Hudson River, there were two ways past Albany on limited-access roads. The one through Selkirk had tolls, the one through Rensselaer had no tolls but was a den of New York bears. "Cops roost in rest areas on the free side," he said, as he admired Selkirk. He called the tolls there "hush money." It was just a bit of overhead, to be taken into account with other tolls, state fuel taxes, and terrain (long slow pulls on hills) in the business planning of his route.

In the Berkshires, seventeen miles from the New York state line, he pointed out a brown-and-white westbound sign that said "Next Highest Elevation on I-90 in Oacoma, South Dakota." The long Berkshire grade had summited at seventeen hundred and twenty-four feet, and was not going to inconvenience Ainsworth in time or fuel economy. From eighteenth gear, he shifted to twelfth for the eastbound descent, and that was about all he needed to do to cope with the cordillera of Massachusetts. "It's not the Rockies," he agreed. "But it is steep enough to have a runaway-truck ramp." Massachusetts might prefer not to know that Oacoma is a Missouri River town accessible from the ocean in a yacht. We passed the escape ramp. It had been used so recently that its sand had not been regroomed.

Since that day in Tacoma when I had last seen him, he had driven nearly four hundred thousand miles, in forty-six states and three Canadian provinces. He had carried liquefied clay from Sandersville, Georgia, to Thunder Bay, on the Canadian shore of Lake Superior, delivering it in a blizzard. He had carried petroleum-based candle wax from Titusville, Pennsylvania, to West Jordan, Utah; fatty acid from Winter Haven, Florida, to Roanoke, Virginia; cutting oil from Hilton, New York, to Cullman, Alabama; tall oil (pine-tree resin) from Mobile, Alabama, to Oklahoma City; "elephant snot," trademarked ClariFloc, from Savannah, Georgia, to a wastewater-treatment plant in Fresno, California ("it's literally a turd attractor"); herbicide from St. Gabriel, Louisiana, to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; calcium slurry from Cockeysville, Maryland, to Kimberly, Wisconsin ("a hard interior wash, an acid wash, failed the first time"); magnesium chloride from Wendover, Utah, to Little Rock, Arkansas; metam sodium ("a cor-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and then paint it.
Other times I paint it
and then see it.
Jasper Johns

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rosive marine pollutant, a Class 8 hazmat") from Cadet, Missouri, to Pedricktown, New Jersey; plasticizer from Kalama, Washington, to Red Bud, Texas; isopropyl alcohol from Merrimack, New Hampshire, to Louisville, Kentucky; and—to the Powder River Basin, in Wyoming—forty thousand pounds of flocculent to Black Thunder Mine.

On the present trip, he had come up through Gila Bend, Flagstaff, Oklahoma City, St. Louis, and Columbus to I-90 east of Cleveland; and he picked me up at the Western Truck Stop in Henrietta—lollipop 362 on the New York State Thruway. New York is anomalous in the matter of Thruway lollipops, as it is in many other respects. Eastbound, we rolled from 362 to 361, 360, 359, and so on. Nearly everywhere else, the numbers count up from west to east. And New York has no weigh stations. In New York you don't pull over to get weighed; bears pull you over and weigh you. They carry portable scales. They take them out in rest areas and put them under your wheels.

We were rolling over broad farmland almost startlingly flat, screened with hedgerows and blistered now and again with drumlins. It was the bottom of Glacial Lake Iroquois, which had shrivelled up as Lake Ontario. Ainsworth in his youth had lived on a small, remote farm there. Each day, he was the first on his school bus and the last off, commuting to his high school in Honeoye Falls, a town divided by a small stream and still centered on a preserved gristmill. Among fields of corn, wheat, and soybeans, Don's brother Lorne lives near Lima, a dozen miles south of the interstate. During Don's infrequent stopovers at Lorne's farmhouse, he sleeps in his only home other than the truck.

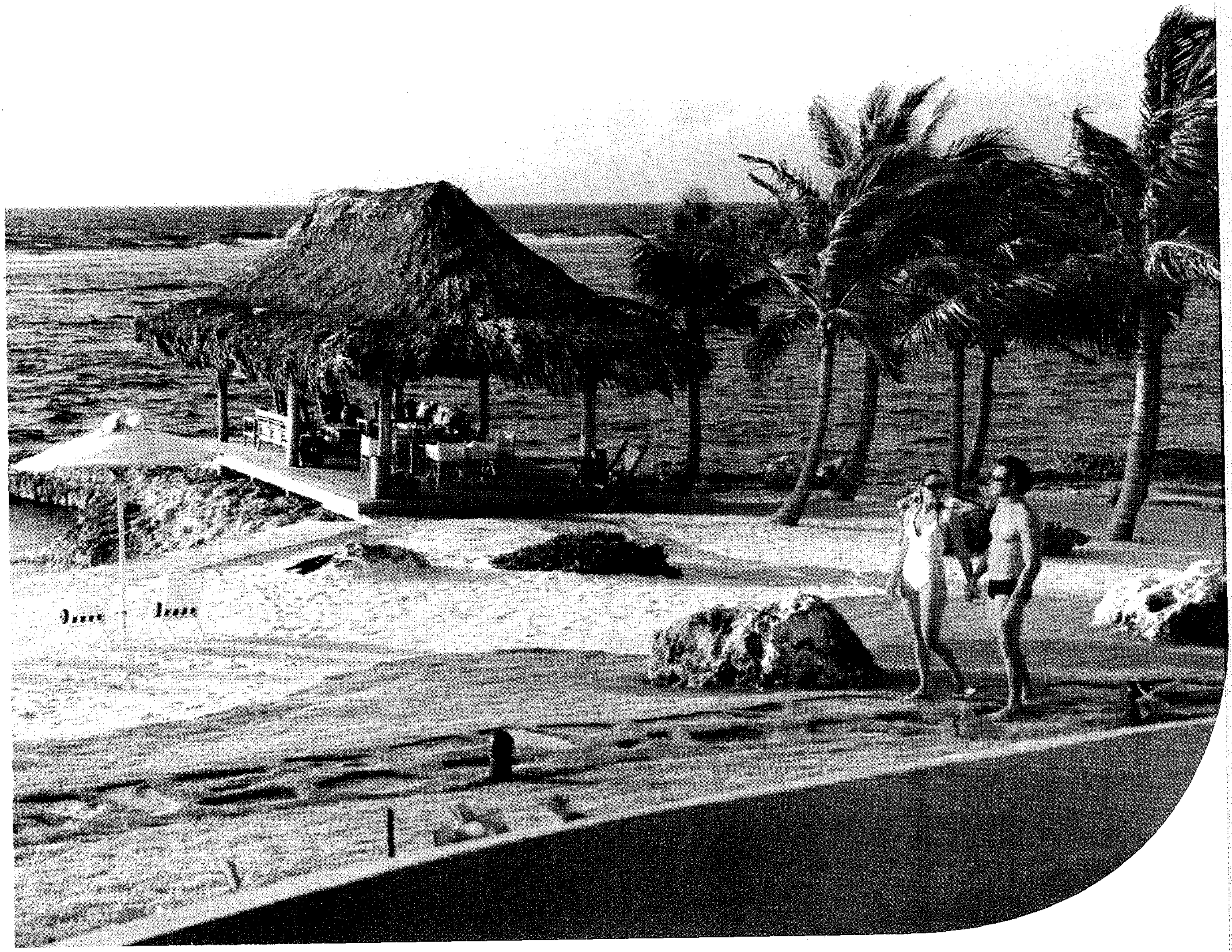
Was I aware that New York produces more milk than Wisconsin? (I wasn't. It doesn't.) Did I know that New York is third in wine grapes? A reefer overtook us, bearing the logo of Heluva Good cheese. Ainsworth turned on the C.B. "Hello, there! Where are you from?" "Sodus Point," came the answer from Heluva Good cheese. Ainsworth said, "My dad and I used to go iceboating there." Click. Was I an admirer of John Steinbeck? Cormac McCarthy? Larry McMurtry? Ainsworth's middle names could be Free Association. "I just finished McMurtry's book about Annie Oakley and Buffalo Bill. It's a series of anecdotes, loosely strung together." Near Utica, the floor of Glacial Lake Iroquois ended in the rise of mountains, the somewhat cooler air, and the green sloping dairyland of the Mohawk River Valley—Little Falls, Canajoharie—as the road ran close by the Erie Canal. "I was in Needles, California, the other day and it was a hundred and twenty-one degrees."

"Hello, there!" he said to toll collectors. If amiability could kill, they'd fall over in their booths. This was a Sunday, but he had not—as he once had routinely—attended service in a truckers' chapel. He described himself as "an Adventist-in-training" now. "It's as close as a Christian can get to being a Jew." He was planning to order new mud flaps from Goldie's Kosher Truck Parts, in Kearny, New Jersey. Approaching the Connecticut River, he said, "In Chicopee, put your hand over your heart, because that is where the *Wall Street Journal* is set." Coast to coast, he knows which truck stops carry "the Walleye." Politically, he tilts to the right, but not enough to capsize. He said, sombrely, of the President of the United States, "George is a lost soul."

Three years had not diminished his energy, his obvious zest for the road; and his vocabulary was still a mixture of truckspeak and idiosyncrasy, often less sortable than sand and salt. As we overtook a "pumpkin"—one of the all-orange eighteen-wheelers of the fleet of Schneider National, the largest truckload carrier in the United States—he said, "An orange litter bag is a Schneider embryo." A tractor-trailer with extra cargo space attached to the tractor was a dromedary. Seeing a murdercyclist with no helmet, he called him a future organ donor.

Seeing flashing red lights far ahead on a Massachusetts shoulder, Ainsworth swung into the fast lane to give a wide berth to a cop with quarry—a four-wheeler having a bad day. Ainsworth was mindful of a new law. "You must get out

...LIVE THE DREAM



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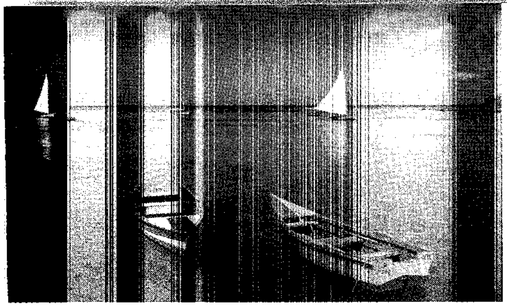
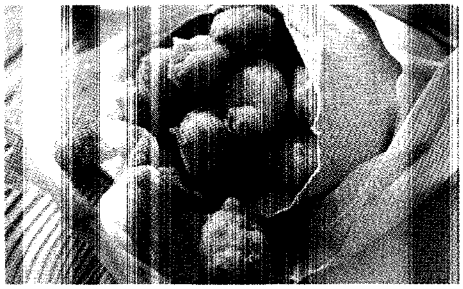
Insider's Island Guide

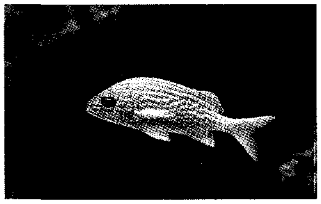
By Amy Ziff

Every day of the year Caribbean people seem to revel in their culture, moving to the beat of their own steel drums. They linger over sights, sounds, and songs in a way that would drive most urbanites mad back home. Perhaps that is part of the charm of the region: The Caribbean islands restore our calm and make us carefree. Yet despite the commonalities, each island has its own personality and magic, with authentic island flavors that are at their peak during the annual celebration of culture, Carnival. Here is a selection of island festivals along with a short list of where to eat while you're there. Keep it as your Caribbean culture guide-at-a-glance.

STEEL DRUMS AND BAHAMIAN SEA LIFE IMAGE: ©LEE FOSTER; *CARNIVAL PARTICI PANTS:* COURTESY OF CURAÇAO TOURIST BOARD; *OTHER IMAGES:* ©CORBIS





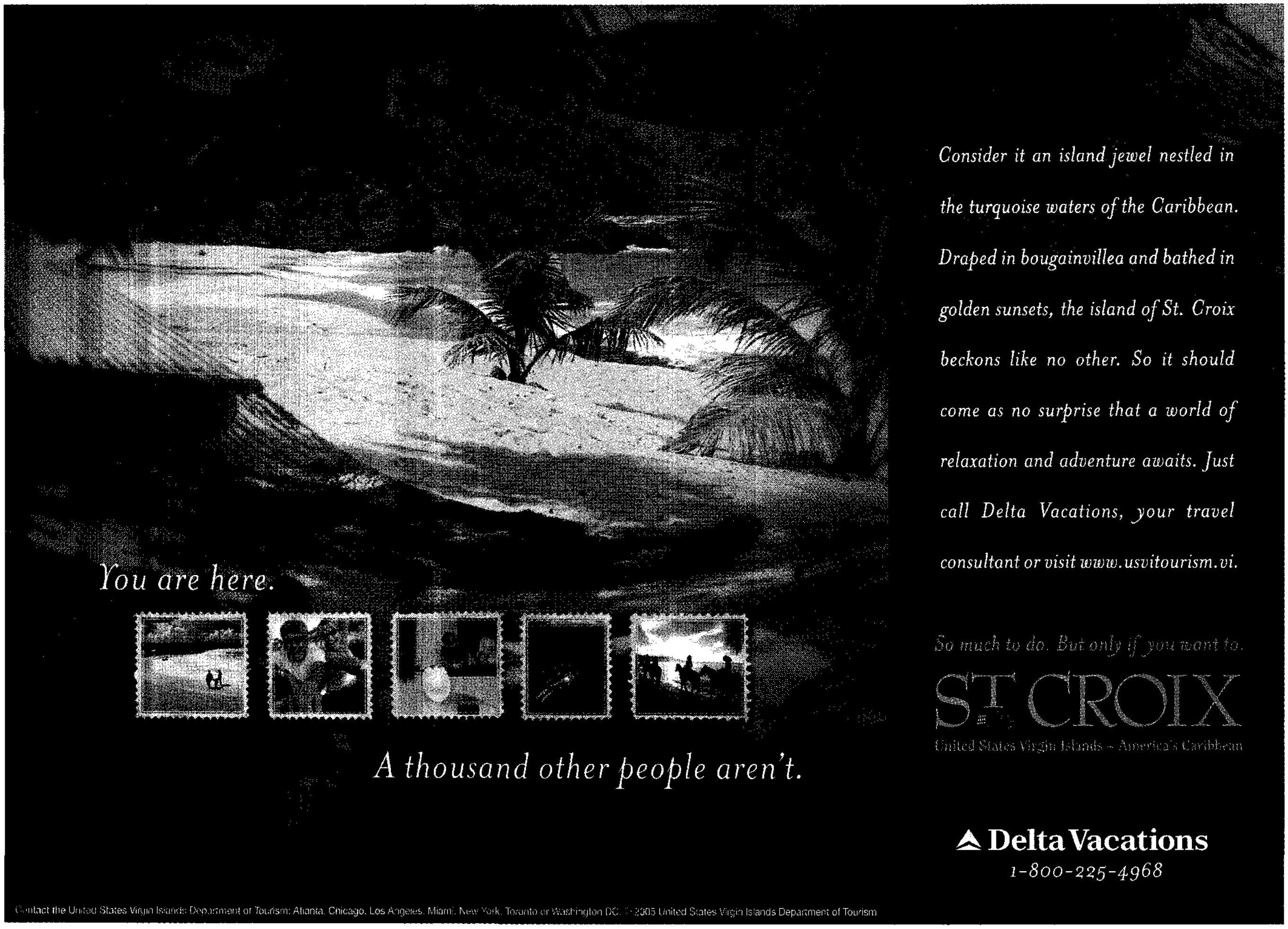


TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Among the most culturally vibrant islands in the Caribbean, Trinidad & Tobago are home to a creative, spirited majority African and East Indian populace. The island's rich literature and theatre scenes are vital components of its heritage. Nobel Prize winner V.S. Naipaul hails from Chaguanas, just south of Port of Spain; renowned poet Derek Walcott helped to found the formidable Trinidad Theatre Workshop; and The Mighty Sparrow, reigns as the Calypso King of the World in his adopted homeland.

PARTY HARDY. Trinbagonians are known for their fierce sense of national pride and profound love for a good party, so a perpetual parade of festivals swaggers through the year, but by far the most outrageous of these is **Carnival**. Nearly every Caribbean nation has a form of it, but Trinidad's Carnival is the original, and its grandeur and passion are unrivaled.

DIVALI DELICACIES. The best opportunity for sampling Trinidad & Tobago's ethnic cuisine: **Divali, the Hindu Festival of Lights** in November, is stunning not only for its display of millions of lit *deyas* or small candles, in honor of the Goddess Lakshmi, but also for the succulent Caribbean-Indian cuisine available at community celebrations, such as curried vegetable-filled roti.



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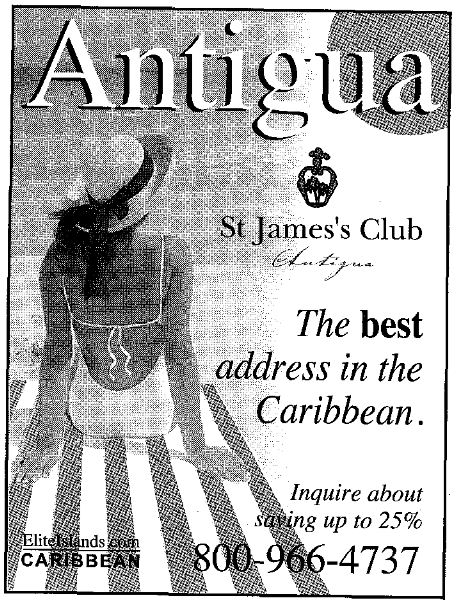
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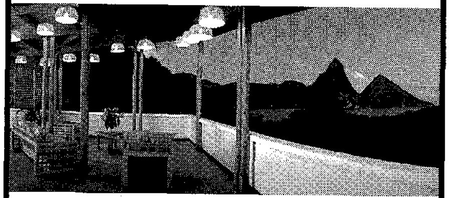
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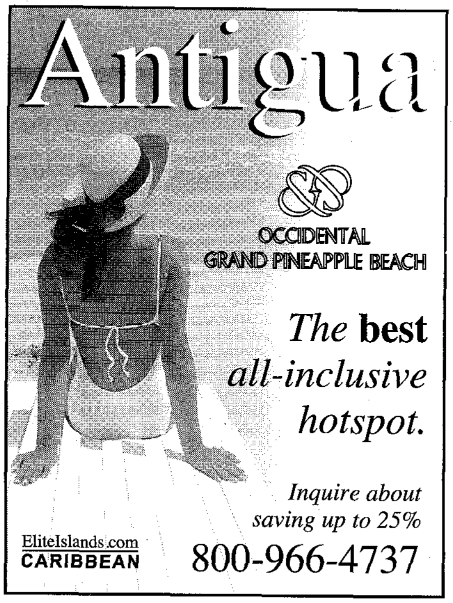
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ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS

With only thirty of the Bahamas' 700 islands inhabited and more than two-thirds of the population living in the capital city of Nassau, it figures that once you venture outside the port-of-call's banks, the pace slows to a perfect Caribbean crawl. Music plays a central role in this festive nation, with rake and scrape goombay rhythms resonating in beachside villages and big cities alike, and plenty of dancing to accompany them.

MOVERS AND SHAKERS. The day after Christmas can be a bit of a letdown in many places around the globe, but not in the Bahamas, where **Junkanoo** is just starting. Locals take to the streets from 2 A.M. for a fiercely competitive parade of flamboyant colors, masks, and costumes and "rushin" (two steps forward, one step back) to the raucous clatter of cowbells, goatskin drums, and whistles.

Popular Nassau eatery, **The Shoal Restaurant**, serves up a traditional breakfast of johnnycake and boiled fish soup flavored by lemon, onions, and peppers. Spicy West African-influenced flavors seep into every dish, but be particularly wary of the seasonings in the "Fire Engine" corned beef hash. (Lunch and dinner are also served.)

CURAÇAO

Like the exotic-looking new girl that shows up in class one day, the Dutch-influenced Caribbean island has a distinctive aesthetic and striking personality that attracts all who see her. The capital city of Willemstad, resembling an idyllic European village, has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage site. Its historic district is filled with homes and shops reflecting seventeenth-century Dutch Colonial architecture. Outside the city, windmills dot the countryside.

THE MAIN EVENT. Curaçao's 2006 Carnival season runs from January 6th through February 28th. But the kick-off event is unlike any other. After Tambu (a drum-based form of protest music and dance from the days of slavery) was prohibited, a derivative called Tumba became the endorsed music of Curaçao's Carnival. The **Tumba Festival** (January 30–February 3) is a competition featuring musicians playing Tumba compositions in the hopes that theirs will be named the official road march song for Carnival.

WORLD-CLASS MODERN. Project Hotel Kurá Hulanda is the impressive restoration effort led by Jacob Dekker. It means "Dutch courtyard" in Curaçao's island vernacular, and the centerpiece of this colonial-era, mansion-turned-stylish-resort is its restaurant, **Astrolab Observatory**. Menu highlights include a cured salmon gravlax appetizer with flying-fish caviar and jicama salad, followed by braised grouper filet with coriander pea sauce and black olive tapenade.

JAMAICA

Whatever your poison—rum punch on the deck at Rick's Café in Negril, wrangling over straw goods at a colorful craft market, or dancing rocksteady and reggae

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clubs of Kingston or Negril—Jamaica's got the delivery technique down pat.

WEEKLONG REGGAE. The annual **Sumfest** in Montego Bay from July 16–22 features top reggae and dancehall performers. Last year, artists like the Marley Brothers and 2005 Reggae Grammy winner Toots and the Maytals appeared at the Catherine Hall Complex.

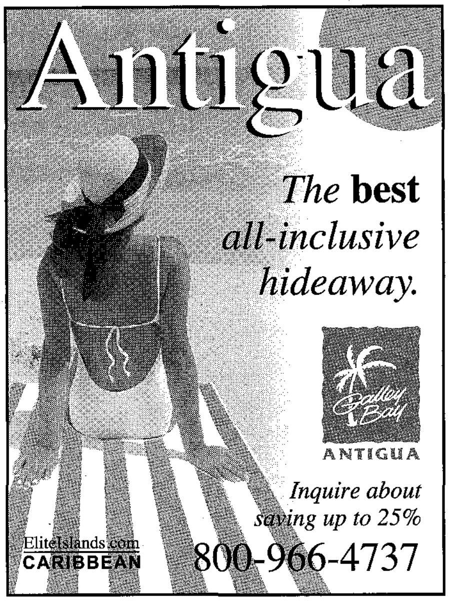
MAKING WAVES. Jamaican flavor is likely best found at one of the country's countless roadside jerk shacks. No amount of gourmet food can replicate the flavor of pimento-smoked and scotch bonnet pepper-flavored meat from these classic lean-tos. But, if you must, dining al fresco on Port Antonio outpost **Norma's At the Marina's** delectable double-smoked pork chops is surely a formidable fine-dining option.

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Each of these isles possesses the essential alluring elements of the Caribbean: stunning beaches (mostly public), lively music, food, and dance, and a warm, laid-back culture. St. Thomas boasts a bustling and renowned shopping scene in the capital city of Charlotte Amalie, while relative seclusion, lush parkland, and a slower pace await in St. John, and an unrelenting commitment to preservation permeates the island of St. Croix.

THIRTY-DAY AFFAIR. The unrelenting **St. John Festival**, which runs throughout the month of June, has three additional main holidays within its sprawling period. Organic Act Day, Carnival, and Emancipation Day are marked by traditional quadrille dancing, scratch band and steel pan performances, Mocko Jumbie (stilt dancing) parades, and West Indian food fairs. If you can't wait that long, St. Croix hosts the **Crucian Christmas Festival** from December 3rd.

TROPICAL FLAIR. After shopping on St. Thomas, jump on the St. John-bound ferry for a down-home meal. **Sweet Plantains** in Coral Bay serves up classic West Indian comfort food such as jerk drumettes with pineapple dipping sauce, braised short ribs in pan gravy with butter beans, and fresh fish in slow-simmering curried gravy with sweet corn and raisins. Sample premium estate sipping rums and admire the panoramic view from this island institution.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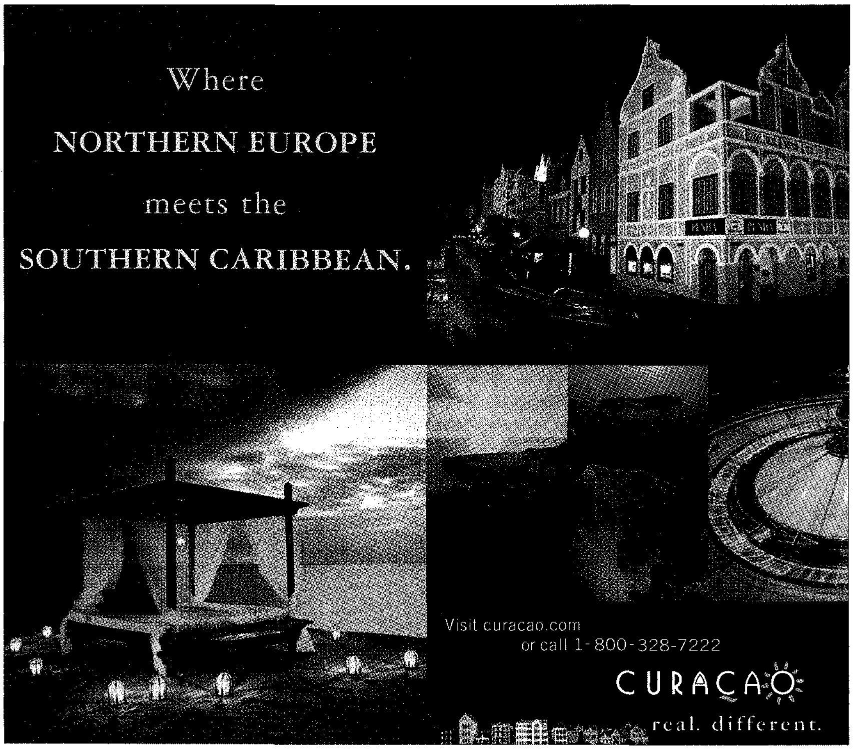
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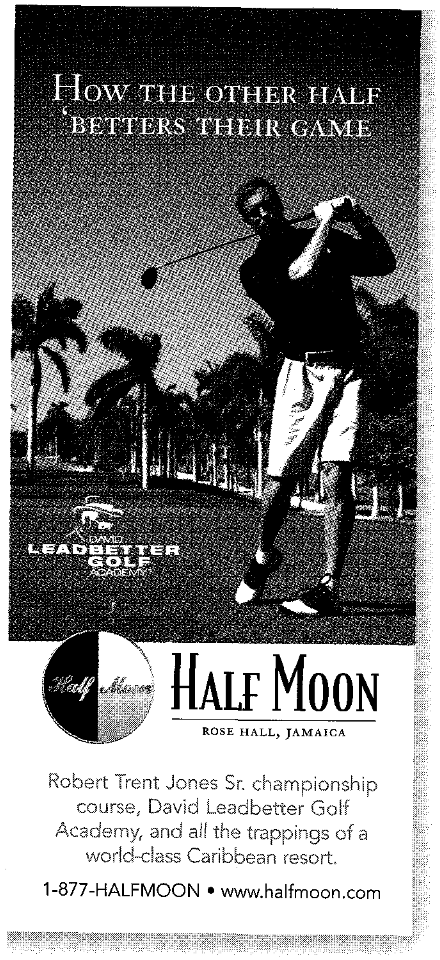

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ANTIGUA

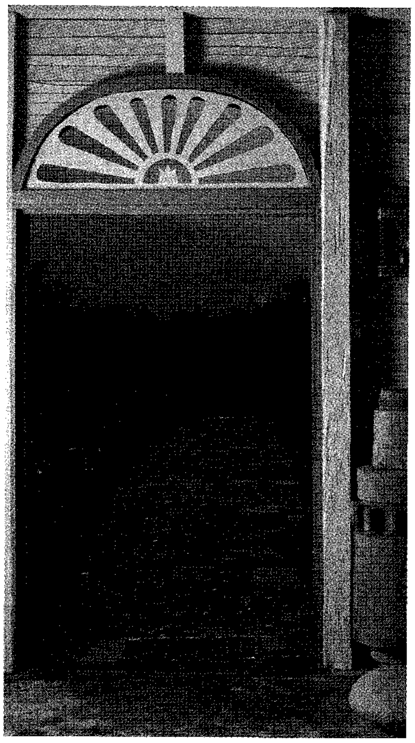
Although this Leeward Island, centrally located in the Caribbean, is renowned for its maritime activities and its unspoiled natural wonders like Devil's Bridge, Antigua has a wealth of cultural activities in which to partake. While there's a fierce devotion to cricket on this independent nation under the British system, nonsporting events abound.

REVELLERS ON PARADE. The ten-day **Carnival** beginning in late July celebrates the nation's emancipation from slavery, with kaleidoscopic costumes, pageants, local concerts, food fairs, and parades. Nonstop music includes calypso, steel band, and soca. And for the climactic J'Ouvert, or Jump-Up, thousands of spectators dance their way through the early morning hours of the event's final day.

AUTHENTIC WEST INDIAN. Ask any islander to recommend a restaurant, and the unanimous refrain will be **The Home**. Located in the boyhood digs of Chef Carl Thomas, local ingredients are used to create authentic West Indian dishes that include fresh fish, fruits, and vegetables as well as herbs from the chef's garden. Look for his signature dish, "Lobster Carl."

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Occupying two-thirds of the island of Hispaniola, whose western side belongs to Haiti, this island brims with activity. From rain forests to running rivers, cities to beaches, the experiences are vast. However much of the charm here is that things move at their own sweet pace. Just as the palms sway in the island breeze, you too shall learn the art of being in the moment.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JAZZ IT UP. Every year, Latin musicians flood Puerto Plata for the **Dominican Republic Jazz Festival** playing into the wee hours of morning. Crooners delight to Latin rhythms; every beat is an awakening. The mix of cultures found here (especially Indian, Spanish, and African) is an integral part of the music. Chucho Valdés was among the artists who performed here last month.

PARRILLADA MIX. Local-beach hang **Captain Cook's** is so good, they boast, Bill Clinton has been here multiple times. House specialties include any of the fresh catch—langostinos, lobster, calamari, scallops, mussels—grilled or stewed to perfection. Plant your feet in the sand and sip a fresh piña colada.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS. Scheduled to open in December, PUNTACANA Resort & Club's latest five-star newcomer is **Tortuga Bay**, situated in a private 15,000-acre gated community. The exclusive villa sprawl, with interiors by Oscar de la Renta, will have every conceivable amenity. With Tom Fazio- and P. B. Dye-designed oceanfront golf courses, a full-service Six Senses spa, and breathtaking scenery, its fifteen villas are already booked through the beginning of next year.

AMY ZIFF IS THE EDITOR-AT-LARGE FOR TRAVELOCITY.

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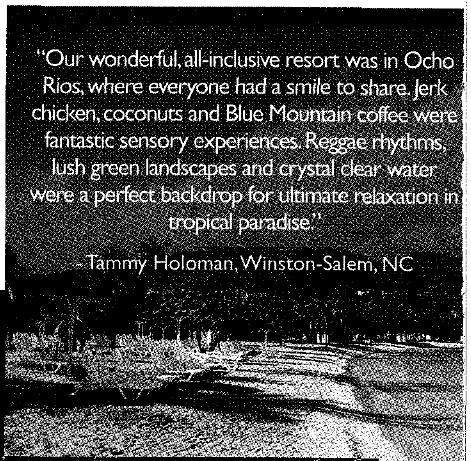
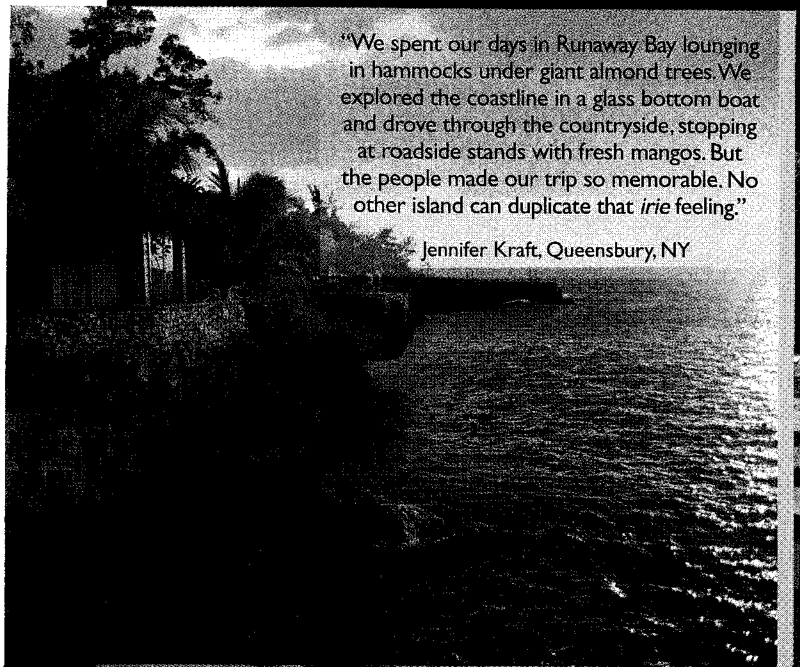


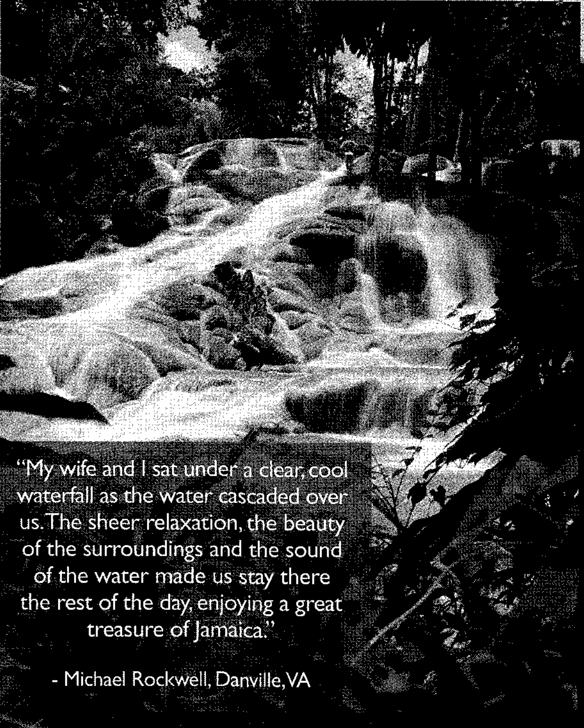
"Our wonderful, all-inclusive resort was in Ocho Rios, where everyone had a smile to share. Jerk chicken, coconuts and Blue Mountain coffee were fantastic sensory experiences. Reggae rhythms, lush green landscapes and crystal clear water were a perfect backdrop for ultimate relaxation in tropical paradise."

- Tammy Holoman, Winston-Salem, NC



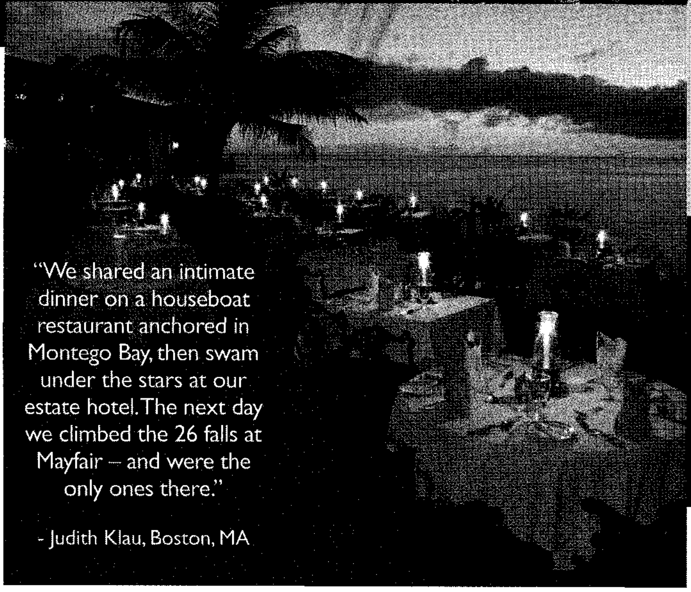
"We spent our days in Runaway Bay lounging in hammocks under giant almond trees. We explored the coastline in a glass bottom boat and drove through the countryside, stopping at roadside stands with fresh mangos. But the people made our trip so memorable. No other island can duplicate that *irie* feeling."

- Jennifer Kraft, Queensbury, NY



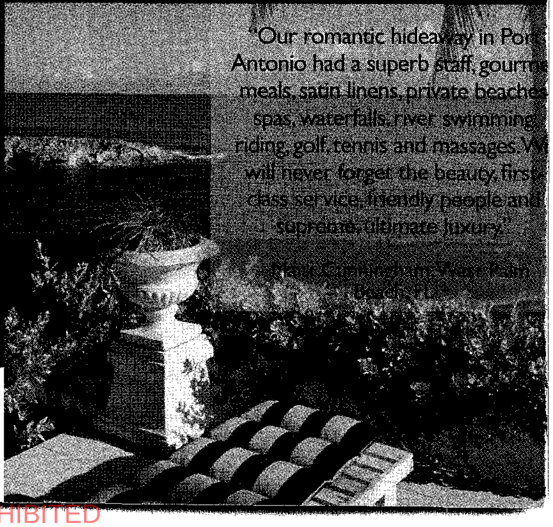
"My wife and I sat under a clear, cool waterfall as the water cascaded over us. The sheer relaxation, the beauty of the surroundings and the sound of the water made us stay there the rest of the day, enjoying a great treasure of Jamaica."

- Michael Rockwell, Danville, VA



"We shared an intimate dinner on a houseboat restaurant anchored in Montego Bay, then swam under the stars at our estate hotel. The next day we climbed the 26 falls at Mayfair – and were the only ones there."

- Judith Klau, Boston, MA



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spas, waterfalls, river swimming
riding, golf, tennis and massages. W
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class service, friendly people and
supreme, ultimate luxury."

- Mark Cunningham, West Palm Beach, FL

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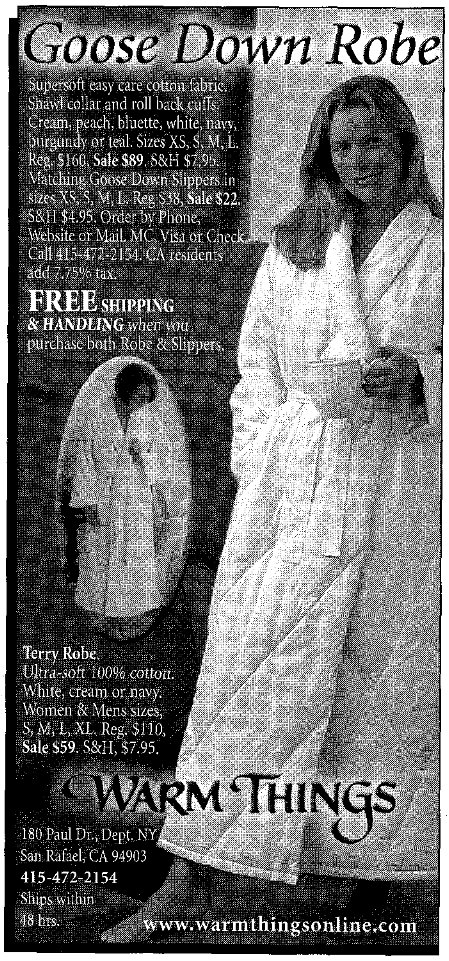
of the right lane, if you can, when you see those flashing lights. They lose more bears in sideswipes than to people who put guns at their heads. They're tired of losing bears." Those flashing red lights were not on the roof but down in the grille of an unmarked Chevy Camaro. Bright-red lights in a police-car grille are known as unexposed cherries. A cop shop is a state-police station or "anywhere where guys in uniforms hang out." Ainsworth studies cop shops to see what is new in unmarked cars. He told me that bears specializing in big trucks drive Suburbans, Explorers, and passenger vans, "meaning baby trucks inspect big trucks—when you see one, you can bet that that cop is a diesel bear, dedicated to truck enforcement, but that doesn't mean if *you* go by him at one two zero he won't nab you." On the scanner, Ainsworth hears state police comparing the day's "trophy tickets—i.e., 'What was the highest speed you nailed someone for today?' " He went on to say, "They know who you are before they pull you over. The communications equipment in their cruisers exceeds the cost of the cruiser." They read a license plate, run it through their computer network, and rapidly find out if they are about to meet Pretty Boy Floyd or a retired librarian. Beside the easternmost I-90 New York toll booths, we saw a specialist bear looking through a trucker's papers. "Predators roost near the water hole," Ainsworth remarked. "Tunnels, bridges, toll booths—any bottleneck. Cops are so bloodthirsty in New York they'll stand in the middle of the road studying you. They are looking for expired license plates. They are looking at C.V.S.A. stickers." Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance. "C.V.S.A. stickers are color-coded and shape-coded, so a cop knows when you were last inspected. I believe in the C.V.S.A." The bear beside the toll booths was dressed in black, a style increasingly in vogue. "They wear all-black uniforms. Their boots are bloused, as they are in the military. Their holsters are made out of ballistic nylon. Why are they dressing that way? To frighten you. To intimidate you."

Police are also likely to ask for toll receipts, with which they test the assertions in a trucker's logbook. Toll receipts are stamped with date and time. Hours-of-service rules, recently revised, limit the trucker to eleven driving hours after ten off, and if the driving time is cumulative and not consecutive it cannot go past the fourteenth hour after ten off. Ainsworth calls this "the fourteen-hour shot clock." He said, "You've got fourteen hours to accomplish the eleven in. If you want to do elective maintenance, you'll never do it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in the middle of the day." Long-haul drivers are still limited to a total of seventy hours in eight days, and when the seventy have been completed they now must spend thirty-four hours off. "Take thirty-four hours off—you're fresh, just like the Pony Express," Ainsworth said coöperatively. "I'm a born-again driver." Nevertheless, truckers feel "toll-ticket-tethered" when driving in the East, tolls being few and scattered in Western states.

To drop off the load from San Diego, we left the Massachusetts Turnpike at Exit 10, went south on I-395, and off into the neighborhood where Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island make a triple junction. After the interstates' oceanic sameness, the silver tanker in those suburban streets was something like an anadromous fish coming out of the sea and going up a river, suddenly having to pick its way through narrow channels past bridge piers and over ledges up rapids past erratic boulders. Old Howarth Road, Oxford, Massachusetts. The groin vaulting of shade trees. The blind curves. The bouldery suburban houses. Dudley Road. Old Webster Road. The hunkered companies. International Photonics Group. Stop, start—stop sign to stop sign, light to light, the truck was kicking like a mule. The load—sixty-two hundred gallons of concentrated WD-40—weighed forty-five thousand pounds, and the surge slamming the front wall of the tank felt like a punch in the spine. Ainsworth said, "It's got a lot of surge to it, a lot of slosh to it, because it is thin."

More than any other product, in his agented and freelance operations, Ainsworth carries WD-40, picking it up from Ken East the brewmaster in San Diego and taking it to packaging plants in Ontario, Texas, Georgia, Wisconsin, or Massachusetts. As Ainsworth styles it, he is "the Johnny Appleseed of WD-40." Occasionally, returning West, he picks up a "secret ingredient" in Painesville, Ohio—a corrosion inhibitor made by Lubrizol and known, like a Swiss bank account, only by a number. WD means water displacement. WD-40 was first brewed for the military, in the nineteen-fifties, and the brew came up right on the fortieth try. The load now surging was thin because his tank had kept its temperatures at and a little above a hundred and fourteen degrees for three thousand and thirty miles. That ovoid elongate stainless-steel tube was a sixty-thousand-dollar thermos. And, if necessary, it could add heat. "This is no F.P.U.," Don said. "This is a chemical tanker." An F.P.U. is a farm-pickup unit that hauls milk. Imagine what people saw, looking out from their living rooms on Old Howarth Road. In Waterloo, New York, on our way East, Don had spent seventy-five dollars for a "spot-free wash" so that people looking at his truck would think they were staring at the sun. Moreover, the tractor was only three and a half months old—a Peterbilt, replacing the earlier one almost identically, but in deep claret striped with tan. "This is one quiet machine," he said. "No wind wings. It's symphony-class." It had a chrome bumper, stainless-steel rock guards, and cylindrical stainless air cleaners with light-emitting diodes. Concealed behind a hinged license plate was a steel hook that could be used to pull him out of a ditch. There were, as before, no logos on the doors, or, needless to say, on the bright steel behind him. He still had his bug screen in the form of the American flag. A stainless-steel black-bristled boot brush was affixed to the lower stainless-steel step on the driver's side, enabling Ainsworth to degrime his custom-made boots as he climbs into the cab. To his inventory of cayman boots, mule boots, eel boots, and shark boots, he had recently added four sea-turtle boots, one pair dyed serpentine green and the other henna. He will not say who made the boots, because he prefers not to visit him in prison. He referred to the turtles as "domesticated." As he drew into the Shield Packaging Company, in Dudley, no one watching could have guessed that

A NOTE

Life is the only way
to get covered in leaves,
catch your breath on the sand,
rise on wings;

to be a dog,
or stroke its warm fur;

to tell pain
from everything it's not;

to squeeze inside events,
dawdle in views,
to seek the least of all possible mistakes.

An extraordinary chance
to remember for a moment
a conversation held
with the lamp switched off;

and if only once
to stumble on a stone,
end up soaked in one downpour or another,

mislay your keys in the grass;
and to follow a spark on the wind with your eyes;

and to keep on not knowing
something important.

—*Wislawa Szymborska*

(Translated, from the Polish, by Stanislaw Baranczak and Clare Cavanagh.)

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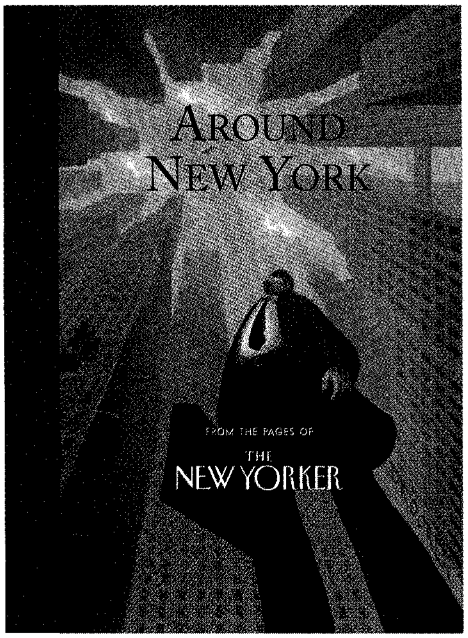

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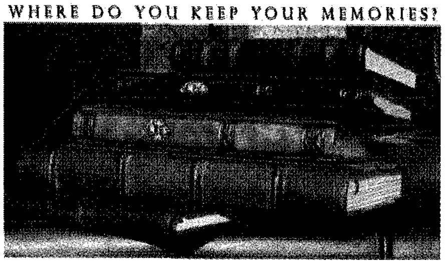

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over the years leading to that moment he had hauled his spotless trailer 775,567 miles.

Shield was ensconced in what had been one of the first spinning mills in America, its windows now filled in with masonry but in a spruce and geometrical manner that had returned dignity to a vacant shell. The approach driveway was flanked by the plant and a retaining wall. The driveway's concrete surface was as clean as it had been the day it was laid. Beside a row of discharge tanks, the driveway was depressed, and a large drain grid was at the lowest point. Any big chemical spill would go into that drain—to end up where? In the nearby Quinebaug River? In nearby Lake Chaubunagungamaug? No. It would go into the packing plant and be disposed of from there. So why did a Ghanaian called James, newly arrived in the United States, come out of the plant laden with thick cardboard sheets, and carefully tessellate them under the entire truck? Because—Chaubunagungamaug or no Chaubunagungamaug—it mattered to the boss that not one drop of anything but rain land on his driveway. The driveway was as stainless as the truck.

On a railway siding in the Shield grounds were two coupled tank cars. Each could hold thirty thousand gallons, five times as much as Ainsworth's truck. My glance moved from the tank cars to the truck driver. "So why not send the WD-40 in tank cars?" I asked him.

He said, "You can't supply heat in transit to a railway tank car; and service is piss poor."

On the Mass Pike, later, I asked him how it felt to be forty-five thousand pounds lighter, how the driving differed. He said, "You don't have to think as far ahead. That doesn't mean we're going to sleep up here." And, in miles that followed, he added, "The gap is the most important thing—keeping a good gap. A lot of times, people will steal your cushion. . . . People talk faster back here, and they also drive faster here in the clogged arteries of the Northeast. They squeeze into my lane and force me off into the shoulder—it's the new trend in four-wheeler driving."

Five thousand live chickens went past us lying on their sides on shelves within open mesh screening, the road breeze ruffling their white feathers, white feathers snowing in the air. In a six-wheel "four-wheeler that civilians would call a truck," they were on their way to Heaven to join Colonel Sanders.

Stopping off for "a dab of fuel," Ainsworth dropped $307.10, and also bought the New York *Times*, *USA Today*, and his beloved Walleye. In the seven hundred and fifty-eight miles I rode with him from western New York to Massachusetts and back to western New York, he paid $108.50 in tolls. When I rode with him from Atlanta to Tacoma, he paid zero in tolls.

"Why was Howard Hughes surrounded by Mormon advisers?"

I said it was news to me.

"They're sober," he said, and went on to praise Flying J truck stops, because they are clean and well managed. They are based in Utah.

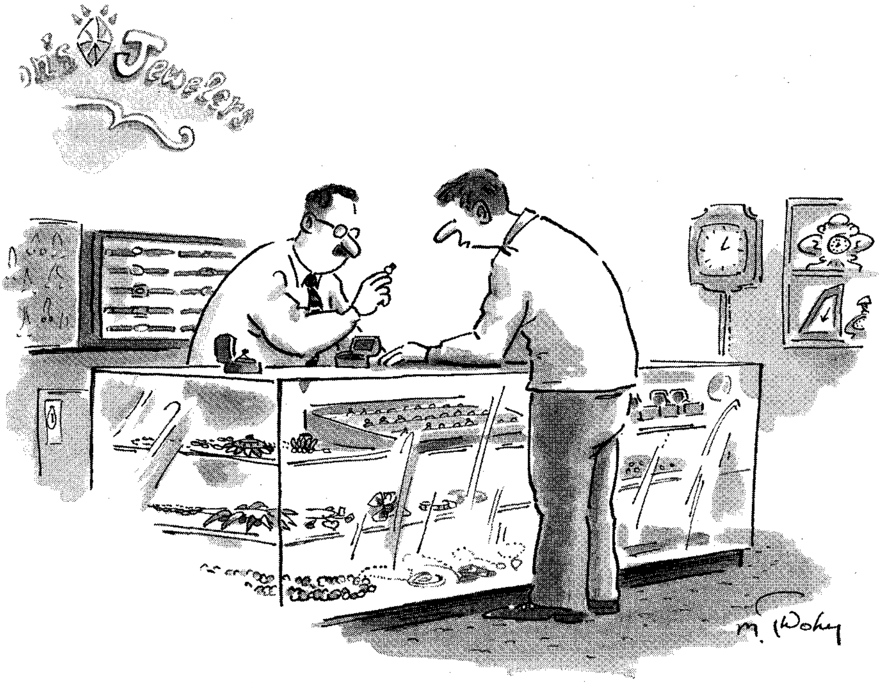
The Petro network of truck stops seemed to be his favorite. We went into one in Waterloo that not only had the usual food, maps, showers, and hardware but also had a chiropractor, a hair salon, an Internet room, and a video horse-racing parlor with wall-size screens. "You can take a prom date to a Petro," Ainsworth asserted. In San Diego, though, no one dances at a Petro. San Diego, in its beautiful setting, clearly regards itself as aesthetically incompatible with big trucks—at least according to one truck driver. He said, "They don't allow ugly unwashed trucks into the county. They have only one tiny truck stop, not a real one. They have no support structure for trucks. The closest real truck stop east is at a casino sixty miles east. The closest to the north is in Los Angeles County; to the south, in Mexico. To the west, nothing, for obvious reasons." He later added, in a letter, "The beauty of the city makes it antithetical to greasy, smoke-belching behemoths of the highways. However short-sighted, their lack of care for trucks does not mean they are an evil town, merely truck-care deprived."

Eastbound, we had overnighted at a TA truck stop, which we reached in the evening, just before his shot clock ran out. "It's a fairly new, bummy one," he said, a description that was not altogether contradicted by the motel next door, where grass was growing through cracks in its dry swimming pool. With Flying J and Petro, TravelCenters of America is one of the national big three. The lot was all but full. Nearly two hundred and fifty trucks were there, a large number for the Northeast but below the size of big truck stops nationally—Bankhead, Georgia, five hundred trucks; Walcott, Iowa, eight hundred trucks. "In these New England and Middle Atlantic states you're scratching with the chickens just to find a place where you can turn your key off," Don said, as he swept his mirrors and wrestled the wheel, gingerly backing into a tight slot between two other trucks. Pull-through parking—in forward, out forward—is not as common as one might hope. Parking in various truck stops, he has to back in about fifty per cent of the time. As we walked through the lot, carrying our gear, the hum of the many trucks was not deafening; it was just voluminous. This was a humid, heavy night in the middle of the summer. At night, anywhere, if it is very hot or very cold, Ainsworth goes into a motel instead of sleeping in the truck, because he prefers not to run the engine just for heat or air-conditioning. This does not seem to preoccupy his colleagues. The hum of a truck stop in the dead of night is one of the sonic emblems of America, right up there with the bombs in air, the rutilant rockets, and the stern impassioned stress. You have not heard the sound of creature comfort until you have heard hundreds of huddled trucks idling through the night.

A company called IdleAire, in Knoxville, has heard the sound and seen a market. It sells cool air and warm air to trucks at truck stops. From an overhead insulated duct, the air comes down a bright-yellow accordion-pleated tube and enters the window of a parked truck. IdleAire's facilities are like black smokers with unimaginable pendant worms waving to and fro, looking to connect with trucks. From the IdleAire company, drivers buy adapters that fit into truck windows and snug the tubes. IdleAire simultaneously offers satellite television and Internet and telephone access. In California, Ainsworth had recently noticed that IdleAire was selling its coolness for $1.60 an hour, while trucks' idling diesels were each burning a gallon an hour, for—at the time—$2.60.

Most tractors and trailers are mated promiscuously, as a matter of business practice, but taking them all together there are some two million big trucks in the United States. When their drivers' shot clocks run out, they idle for ten hours. Two million trucks times ten hours times three hundred days amounts to six billion gallons of diesel fuel per annum burned basically to keep truck drivers cool, to keep truck drivers warm, and to keep happy Presidents content.

Walking on through the sultry lot, Ainsworth said, "Misuse of a resource in short supply. Some folks call that fuel." ♦



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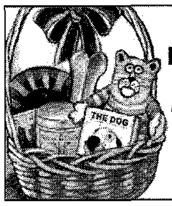
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FICTION

LOVE AND OBSTACLES

BY ALEKSANDAR HEMON

ALEXANDRA CATIERE, "BEHIND THE GLASS #2" (2005)

Before I opened my eyes, I listened: above the sound wall of the clattering train, I heard two male voices. One of them was deep and spoke with a southern Serbian accent; the other was mumbly and uttered words with the slurry inflections of a Sarajevo thug—the soft consonants further softened, the vowels stuck in the gullet. I wasn't sure what they were talking about, but there was the gurgling sound of liquid in a bottleneck, the crackling of a burning cigarette.

"France," the Sarajevan said.

"Refused entry."

"Germany."

"Refused entry."

"Greece."

"Never went."

"Refused entry."

"Got me there," the Serbian said and chortled.

The train slowed to a stop; I heard the doors opening. One of the men got up and stepped out of the compartment, and the other followed. I opened my eyes as the door slid shut. They had pushed the window down and were smoking. Beyond them, I could see a man and a woman running toward the train, suitcases beating against their calves—there was a gash in the woman's leg. I contemplated escaping from the compartment: I had a bundle of money and my life to worry about. But my fellow-travellers had pressed their butts against the door, a Y-shaped crack peeping out of the pants of one of them. The train lurched and started moving; they flicked their cigarettes out the window and came back in. I closed my eyes again.

"Did you know Tuka?" the Sarajevan asked.

"No."

"How about Fahro?"

"Which Fahro?"

"Fahro the Beast."

"Fahro the Beast. His nose was bitten off?"

"Yes, that Fahro."

"I didn't know him."

"Which cellblock were you in?"

"Seven."

"Rape?"

"Burglary."

"Burglary was six."

"Well, I was in seven," the Serbian said, peevishly.

"I was in five. Manslaughter."

"Nice."

"I was a little drunk."

"Life is death if you don't have a little drink every now and then," the Serbian concluded wisely, and chugged from the bottle.

They fell silent. It was not unreasonable to suspect that they could smell my fear and were just about to slit my throat and take my money. When I sensed one of them shuffling his feet and moving toward me, I opened my eyes. They were staring at me with bemused expressions.

"The child's awake," the Sarajevan said.

"Where are you headed?" the Serbian asked me.

"Zagreb," I said.

"What for?"

"To visit my grandfather."

"If Grandma had balls, she would be Grandpa," the Sarajevan said, for no apparent reason.

"Do you have a pretty sister we could be very nice to?" the Serbian asked and licked his lips.

"No," I said.

My grandfather was dead, and, when he was not, he did not live in Zagreb. I did have a sister. The truth was that my destination was Murska Sobota. I had a wad of money in my pocket and was on a mission to buy a freezer for my family.

Some weeks before I set out on this journey, my father had called a family meeting. "There comes a time in the life of every family," he'd said, "when it becomes necessary to acquire a large freezer." The freezer compartment in the fridge was no longer spacious enough for us. We needed to store food—meat, mainly—for growing children; we needed to have available at all times the supplies for an improvised feast for numerous family friends. "The very well-being of our family requires new investments," my father said. "Abundance

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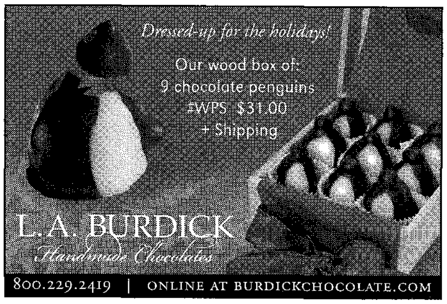

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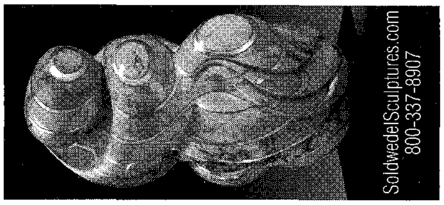

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demands storage." My father liked to play the family-democracy game, and we often had to sit through this kind of congress so that we could vote for a decision that Father had already made. As usual, there were no objections: my mother, although she wanted a freezer, rolled her eyes at my father's rhetoric; in my usual seventeen-year-old manner, I made sure that I was visibly indifferent to all that was said; my sister was taking notes, much too slowly. She was thirteen at the time, and still invested in the perfection of her handwriting.

To my utter surprise, I was unanimously elected to be the purchaser of the freezer. Father worked in mysterious ways: he had researched the biggest model available on the lousy market of socialist Yugoslavia—a six-hundred-litre one—and he had somehow discovered that the best price was in Murska Sobota, a small town deep in Slovenia, not far from the Hungarian border. I was to take the night train to Zagreb, then a bus to Murska Sobota, where I would spend the following night at a hotel ambitiously called Evropa. The next day, I was to deliver the money to a man named Stanko, and that was where my mission ended—Stanko would arrange the shipment, and all I needed to do was come home safely.

The Sarajevan looked at me intently, as if deciding whether or not to do me in for my obvious lies. He wore a suit and a tie, but his shoes looked shitty, the soles peeling off. Blinking very slowly, as if counting time with his eyes, he asked me, "Do you fuck?"

"What?"

"Do you fuck? Do you use your dick the way it is supposed to be used?"

"A little."

"I love to fuck," the Serbian said.

"There is nothing sweeter than a fuck," the Sarajevan said.

"Yeah," the Serbian said wistfully, and rubbed his crotch. He had tattooed knuckles; he wore a leather jacket and shoes so pointy they looked as if he had sharpened them so that they could easily penetrate the skulls of his enemies.

Despite having voted for my deployment on the freezer mission, my mother had worried about me travelling. I, on the other hand, was excited: Murska Sobota sounded exotic and dangerous. This was the first time I'd be away from home alone, on the road, my first opportunity to live through the kind of experience from which a real poem might spring. For I was a budding poet; I had filled entire notebooks with verses on teen-age longing and the attendant crushing boredom. I equipped myself for the expedition with a fresh notebook, extra pencils, a book of Rimbaud's poems—my Bible ("While swept downstream on indifferent Rivers / I felt the boatmen's tow-ropes slacken"), several packs of Marlboros (rather than the usual crappy Drinas I smoked), and a single contraceptive pill I'd got in exchange for a live triple LP by Emerson, Lake & Palmer that I no longer cared about, as I had moved on to the Sex Pistols.

I was an unwilling virgin, my bones draped in amorous flesh. Consequently, I held the belief, not uncommon among adolescent males, that beyond the constraining circles of family, friends, and prudish high-school girlfriends there lay a vast, wild territory of pure sex, where the merest physical or eye contact led to copulation unbounded. I was ready for it: in preparation for the journey, I had tested a number of scenarios in my hormone-addled brain and determined that the crucial moment would be when I offered the woman the pill, thereby expressing my gentlemanly concern and responsibility—no female would be able to say no to that.

"You look like a smart kid," the Sarajevan said. "Let's see if you can figure out this riddle."

"Let's hear it," the Serbian said.

"It has no head, but it has a hundred legs, a thousand windows, and five walls. It is never the same, but it is always almost the same. It is black and white and green. It disappears, and then it comes back. It smells of dung and straw and machine oil. It is the biggest thing in the world, but it can fit into the palm of your hand."

The Sarajevan watched me intently, stroking his three-day beard, as though remembering how he was at my age, before he boarded the drunken boat of adulthood, before he discovered the answer to the riddle.

"It's a house," the Serbian said.

"No house has a hundred legs, you stupid fuck," the Sarajevan said.

"Don't call me stupid," the Serbian

said and rose to face him, his hands curled into fists.

"All right, all right," the Sarajevan said. He stood up and embraced the Serbian. They hugged and kissed each other's cheeks several times, then sat down. I hoped that the riddle had been forgotten, but the Sarajevan would not let it go. He poked my knee with his shitty shoe and said, "What is it, kid?"

"I don't know."

"An elephant," the Serbian said.

"Shut up," the Sarajevan said. The Serbian leapt up, ready for a punch; the Sarajevan got up; they kissed each other's cheeks; they sat down.

"Respect," the Serbian muttered. "Or I will crack your fucking skull open."

The Sarajevan ignored him. "What is it?" he asked me. I pretended I was thinking.

"Everything," the Serbian said. "It is everything."

"With all due respect, brother, that is not the correct answer."

"Who says?"

"Well, *everything* does not disappear and come back."

"Says who?"

"Everybody knows that doesn't happen."

"I say it does."

"*Everything* cannot fit into the palm of your hand."

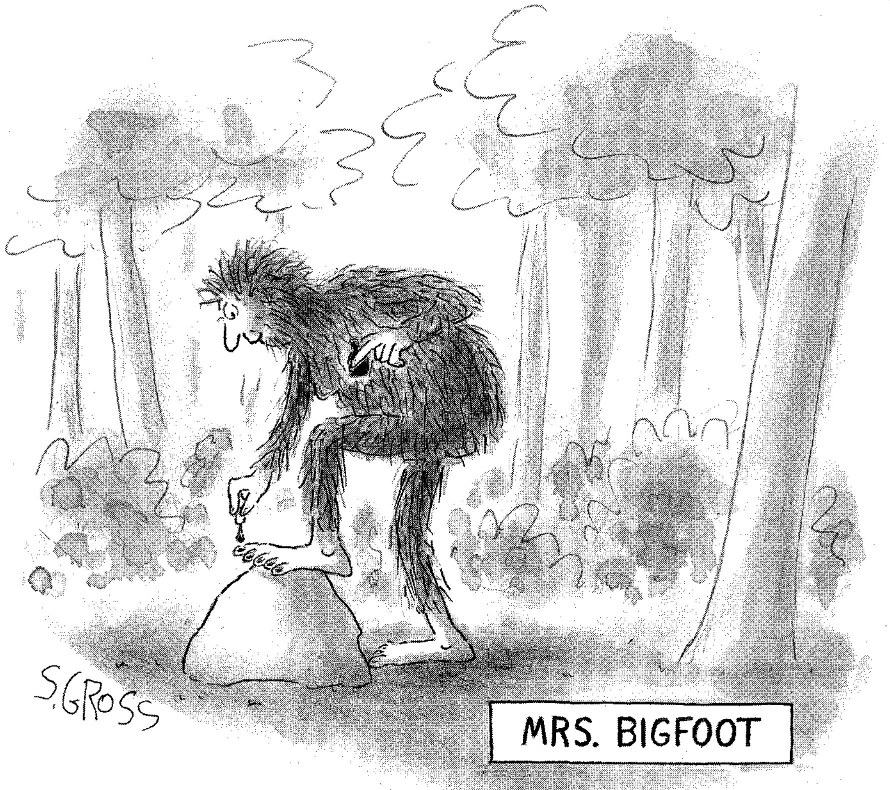
"I say it can," the Serbian said and got to his feet, fists as tightly clenched as ever. The Sarajevan stayed in his seat, shaking his head, apparently deciding against smashing the Serbian's face in.

"All right," he said, "if it is that important to you, it is everything."

"Because it is," the Serbian said and then turned to me. "Isn't it?"

The blazing clarity of dawn: light creeping from beyond muddy fields; a plane leaving a white scar across the sky; drunken soldiers howling songs of love and rape in the next compartment. The men had quieted down, exhausted by their own babbling, and I dropped off. When I woke up, they were gone, leaving a stench of sweaty mindlessness behind. I noted down the conversation and the riddle as I remembered them, then many other things. On this trip, I was happy to realize, everything was notable.

In Zagreb, I boarded a bus to Murska Sobota. The quaint hills of Zagorje, with their picture-postcard houses and the occasional fairy-tale castle mounted on a hillock; a healthy, well-dressed peasant leading a herd of fat cows across the ho-



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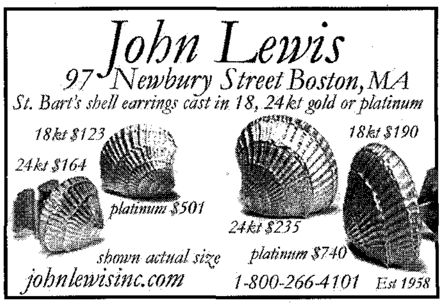
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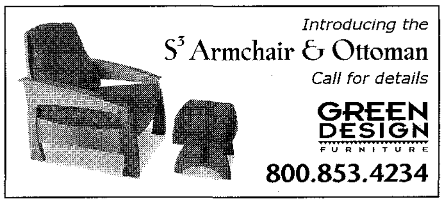
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rizon; chickens pecking for worms in the middle of a dirt road: I voraciously noted it all down—it was as though someone had prettied up the land for my arrival. The man sitting next to me was invested in a crossword puzzle; he frowned and refrowned, fellating his pen. His cuffs were threadbare, his knuckles bruised; his ring stone was twisted toward his middle finger. Many of his letters were too big for the little squares. At some point, he turned his impeccably shaved face to me and asked, as though I were his assistant taking notes, "The biggest city in the world?" "Paris," I said and he returned to the puzzle.

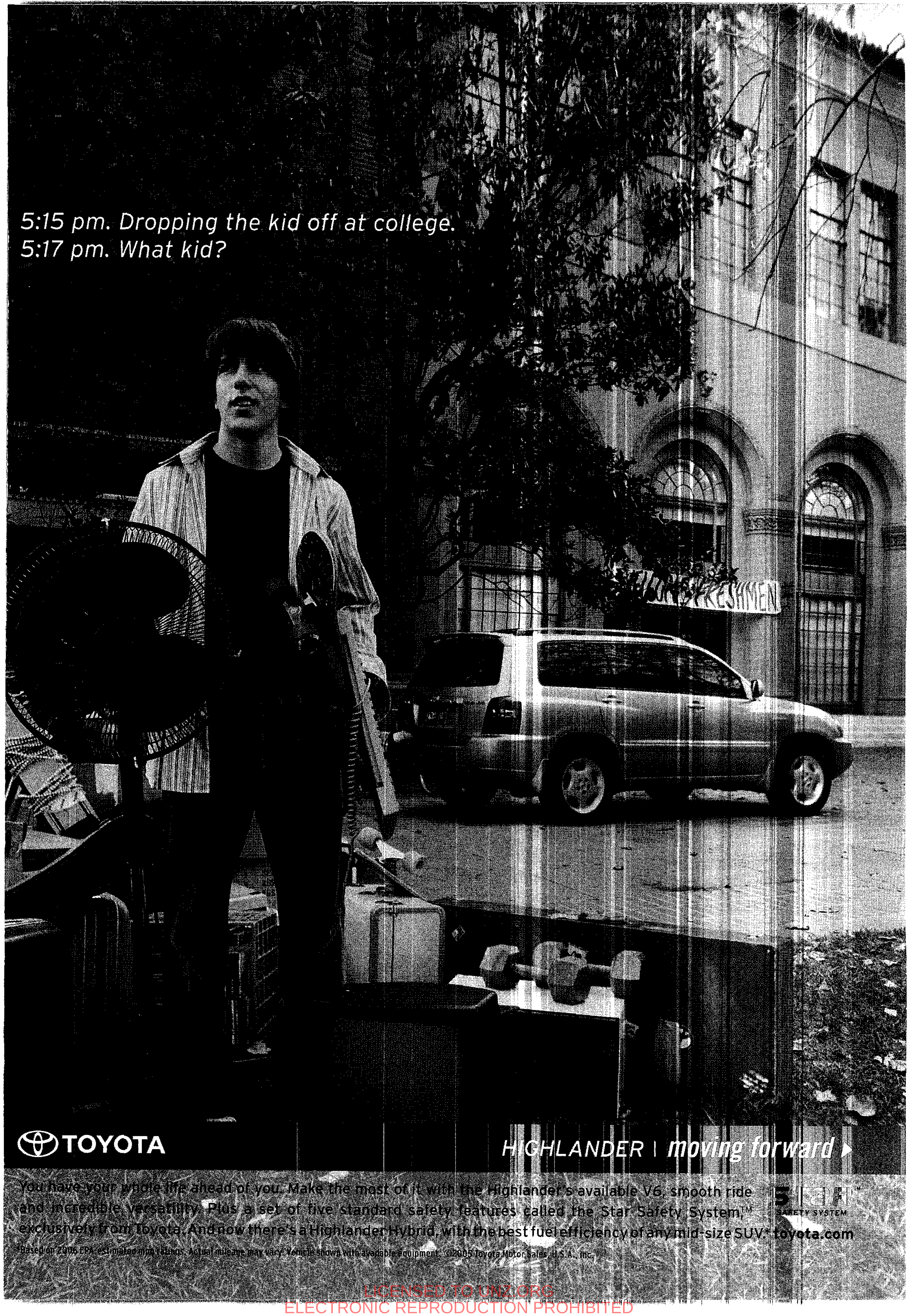
This happened in 1981, when I was long and skinny; my legs hurt and I could not stretch them in the cramped bus. Pus accumulated in my budding pimples; there was an arbitrary erection in progress. This was youth: a perpetual sense of unease that made me long for a place where my discomfort would seem natural, where I could wallow in my own wounds. My parents, however, believed that it was their duty to guide me to a good, pleasant place, where I could be normal. They arranged spontaneous conversations about my future, during which they insisted that I declare what it was that I wanted from life. I responded with derivations of Rimbaud's rants about the unknown quantity awakening in our era's universal soul, about "scents, sounds, colors, and thought mounting thought," etc. Needless to say, they were terrified by the fact that they had no idea what I was talking about. Parents know nothing about their children; no matter what they believe, the children are always one step ahead. My soliloquies often made Father regret that he hadn't belted me more when I was little; Mother secretly read my poetry—I found traces of her worried tears staining the pages of my notebooks. I knew that the whole purpose of the freezer project was to confront me with what Father called "the laundry of life" (although Mother always did his laundry)—to have me live through the kind of banal, quotidian operation that constituted my parents' existence and see that such operations were necessary. They wanted me to join the great community of people who made food collection and storage the central organizing principle of their lives.

Food—bah! I forgot to eat the chicken-and-pepper sandwich my mother had made for me. In my notebook, I waxed poetic about the alluring possibility of simply continuing on past Murska Sobota and never buying the freezer. I would throw myself into *the infinity of lifedom*, taking the train to Austria, then on to Paris. I would renounce college and the future of food storage and buy a one-way ticket to the utterly unforeseeable. Sorry, I would tell my parents, but I had to do it. I had to prove that one could have a long, happy life without ever owning a freezer. "Inscribed in every journey is the frightening, exhilarating possibility of no return. This is why we say goodbye," I wrote in my notebook. "You knew that it could happen when you sent me to the monstrous city, to the endless night, when you sent me to Murska Sobota."

I had never checked into a hotel before. I worried that the receptionist at the Hotel Evropa would not let me in because I was too young. I worried that I did not have enough cash or that my documents would be unexpectedly revealed as forgeries. I practiced the lines I would have to deliver at the reception desk, and the rehearsal quickly turned into a fantasy in which a pretty receptionist checked me in with lassitude, then took me up to my room only to rip off her hotel uniform and submerge me in a sea of pleasure. The fantasy was duly noted in my book.

Needless to say, the receptionist was an elderly man, hairy and cantankerous, named Franc. When I arrived, he was checking in a foreign couple, attired for travelling convenience in sneakers, khakis, and waterproof jackets. They wanted something from him, something he wasn't willing to concede, and by their open vowels and nasal whining I understood that they were American. I didn't know how to assess the age of human beings who were older than me, but the woman looked much younger than my mother, perhaps because her hands were smooth and unworn. Her husband was shorter than she was, wrinkles rippling away from his eyes, a dimple in his chin deep enough to hold a screw. He kept both of his knuckly hands on the reception desk, as though he were about to leap over it and charge at the receptionist. Franc had a thin mustache that lay on his upper lip like hair sediment. On his neck there were sinister parallel sets of fingernail scratches.

I remember all this, even though I


5:15 pm. Dropping the kid off at college.
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didn't write it down, because I spent an eternity waiting for the Americans to complete their check-in. I began imagining a conversation I would have with the woman if we happened to share an elevator while her unseemly husband was safely locked up somewhere else. In my high-school English, I would tell her that I liked her face flushed with pilgrimage, that I wanted to hold the summer dawn in my arms. We would stagger, embracing, to her room, where we wouldn't even make it to the bed before, etc. Her name, I decided, was Elizabeth.

"Thank you," she said finally, and stepped away from the desk.

"You're welcome," Franc said.

He had no interest in me, for I presented no challenge: he could speak Slovenian to me and he could easily disregard any of my demands. He took my I.D. and my money and gave me in return a large key attached to a wooden pear with the number 504 carved into it.

Elizabeth and her husband were still waiting for the elevator, whispering to each other. They glanced at me and did what Americans do (as I learned much later) whenever they make unwanted eye contact: they raised their eyebrows, rolled their lips inward, and brightened their faces with expressions of innocent disinterest. I said nothing; nor did I smile. On the pear that Elizabeth was holding I saw the number 505, so when they stepped out I followed them. My room was opposite theirs, and as we were each crossing our respective thresholds Elizabeth looked back at me and flashed a splendid smile.

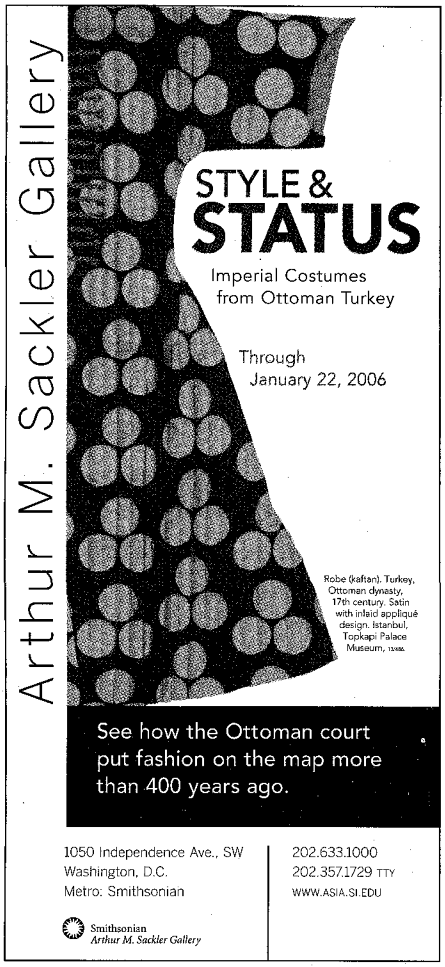
It was in Murska Sobota that I first confronted the ineluctable sadness of hotel rooms: the untouched notepad; the bedspread with infernal purple flowers; the black-and-white photograph of a soulless seaside resort; the garbage can lined with crumpled tissues that suggested a messy quickie. The window looked over the roof of a concrete parking garage, in the middle of which there was a vast puddle, shimmering like a desert mirage. There was no way I was going to spend a night alone in this cave of sorrow. I needed to find a place where comely Slovenian girls stood in clusters, steadily rejecting the clumsy advances of Slovenian boys, preserving their maidenheads for a pill-carrying boy from Sarajevo, his body a treasure to squander.

Murska Sobota's main street appeared to have been depopulated in a hurry; only the occasional empty bus drove by, its interior lights dimmed. There were no cafés or bars or young people that I could see, only closed stores, whose windows displayed stiff mannequins with their arms spread in obscure gestures of welcome, towers of concentric pots looming over families of frying pans, single shoes lined up on racks, so different in size and shape that each one seemed to represent a missing person. I spotted the appliance store where I would purchase my family's entry into the future. In the window an enormous freezer glowed like a treasure chest in a commercial.

I decided to explore the side streets and found nothing but a slumbering row of houses, the nightmarish murmur of television sets passing through a thousand quiet windows. Here and there the sky was stained with stars. A neon sign in the distance announced the name of a bar called Bar, and there I went.

There was nobody in Bar except a bearded, frog-faced man, whose chin rested on the brim of his beer stein. A cloud of smoke hung as thick as a ghost above him. Without lifting his head, the man looked at me intently, as though he had been waiting for me to arrive with an important message. Message I had none, so I sat as far away from him as possible, at a table near the bar, which was tended by nobody I could see. I lit a cigarette, determined to wait for some exemplar of female beauty to walk in.

The man lit a cigarette, too; he exhaled as though releasing his soul through his mouth. I began making up a poem in which the narrator walked into an empty bar, smoked and drank alone, and then discovered that the bartender was dead, slumped in a chair behind the bar, his left hand reaching for a stein of still foaming beer. I had left my notebook in the hotel, so I could not write it down, but I persevered, coming up with rhymes and avoiding looking at the man. Most human be-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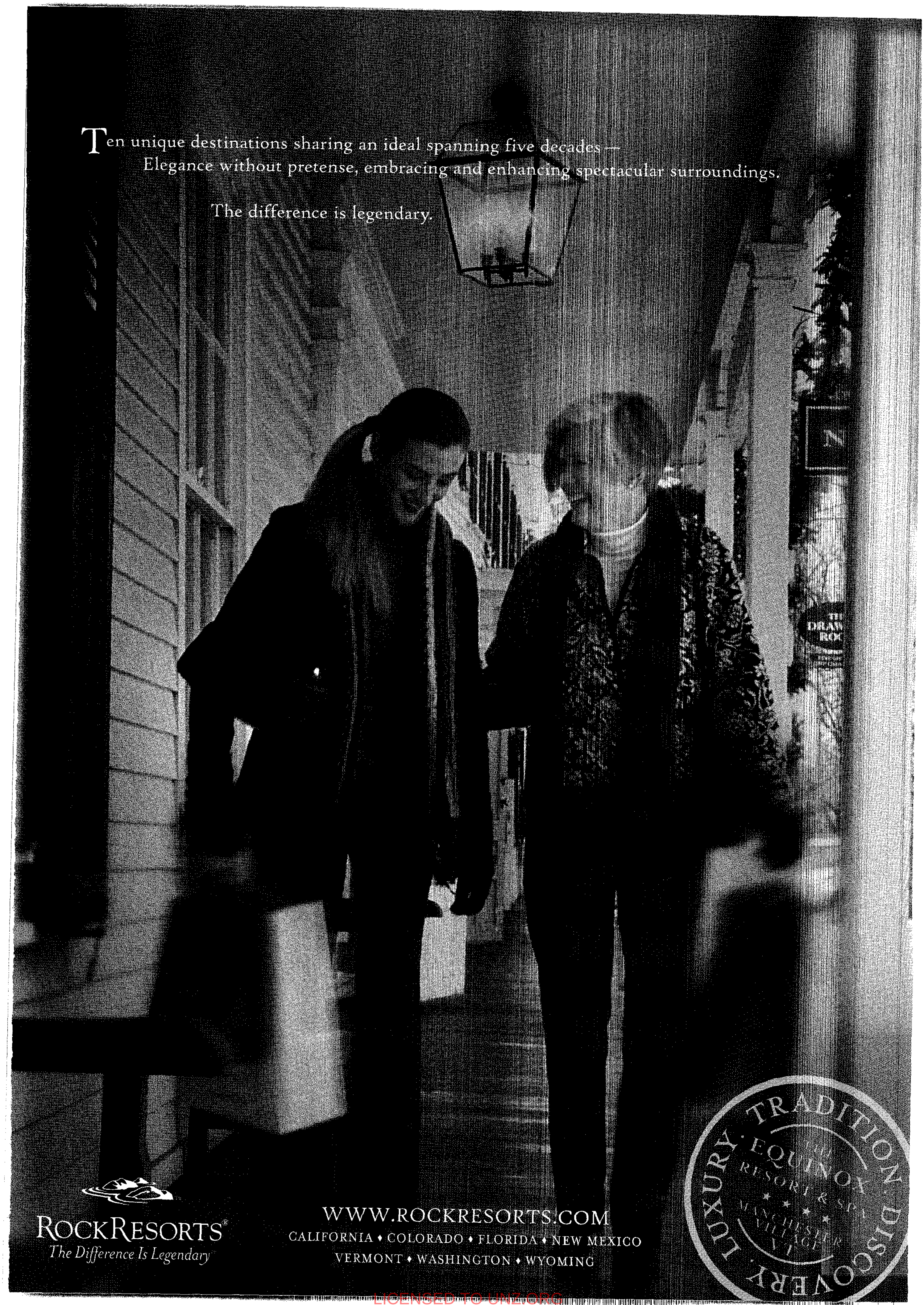
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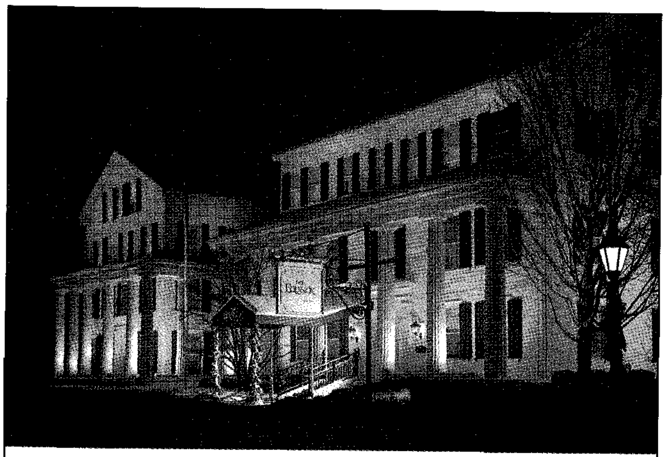

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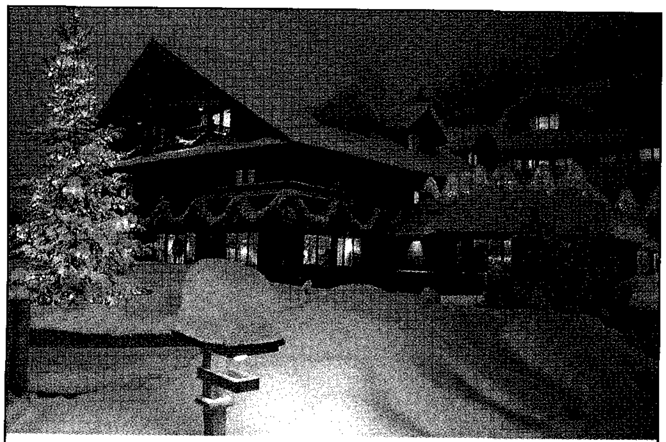

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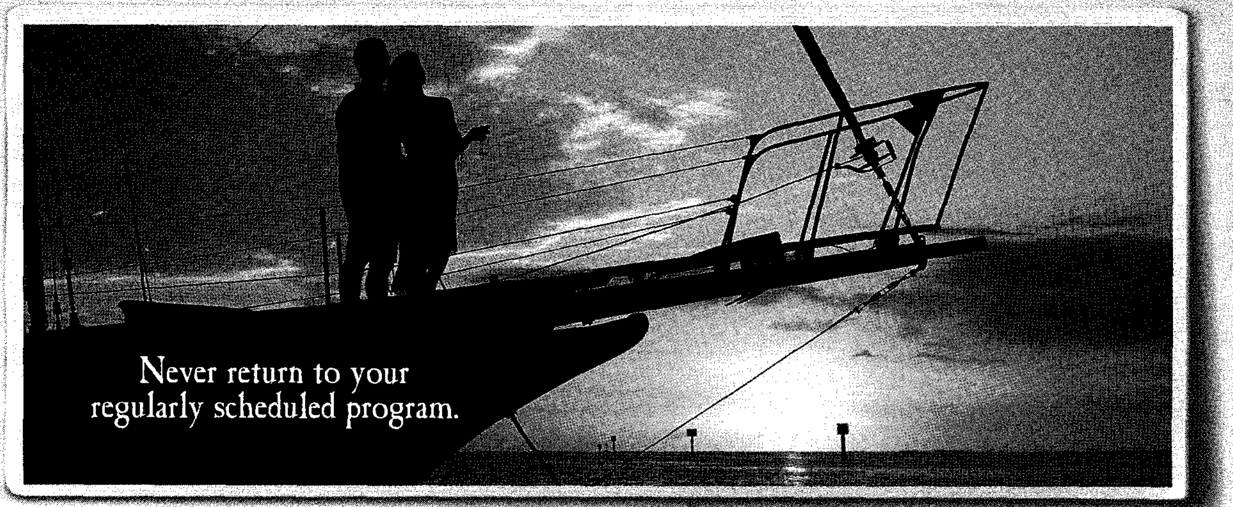
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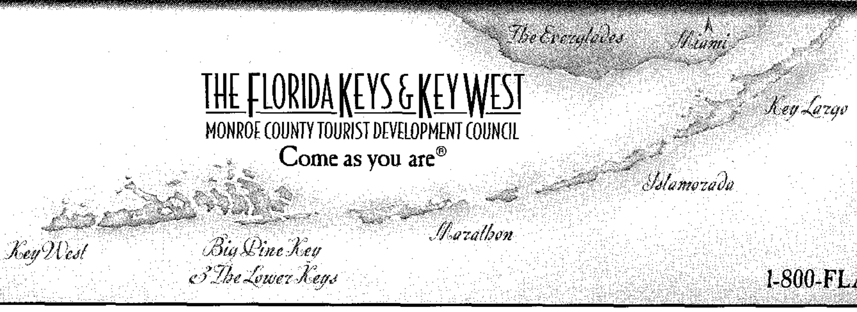
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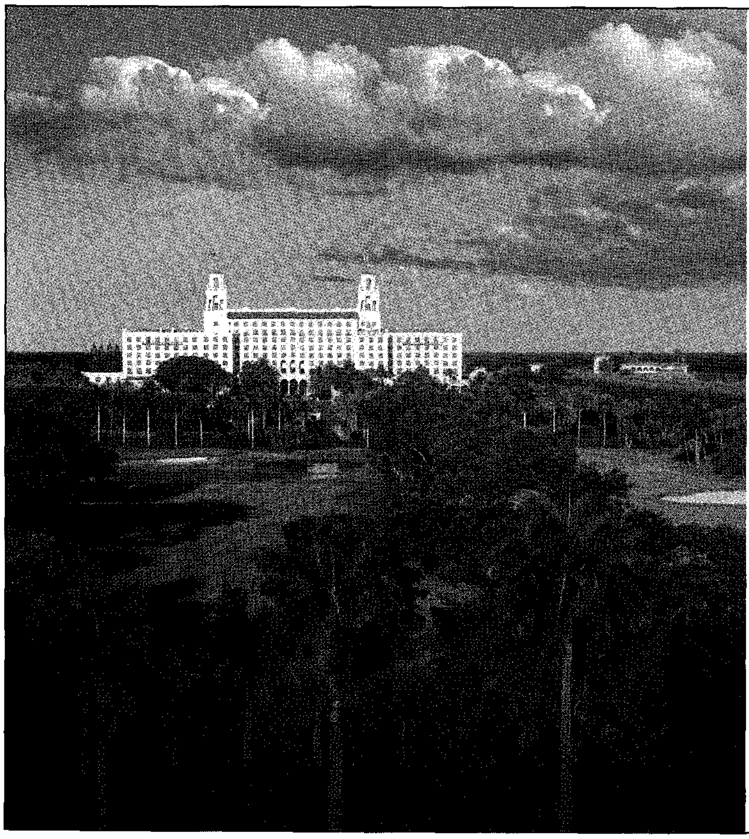

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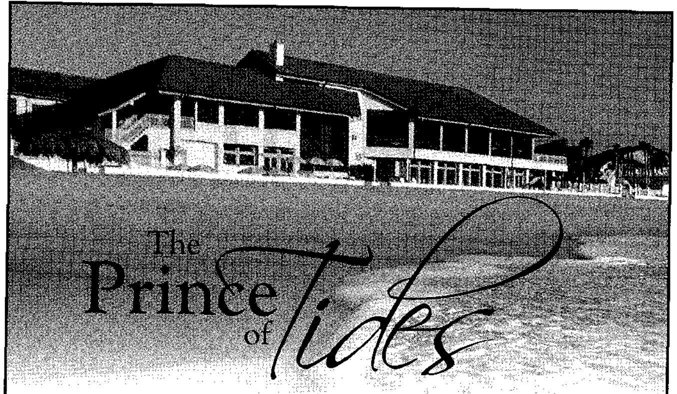

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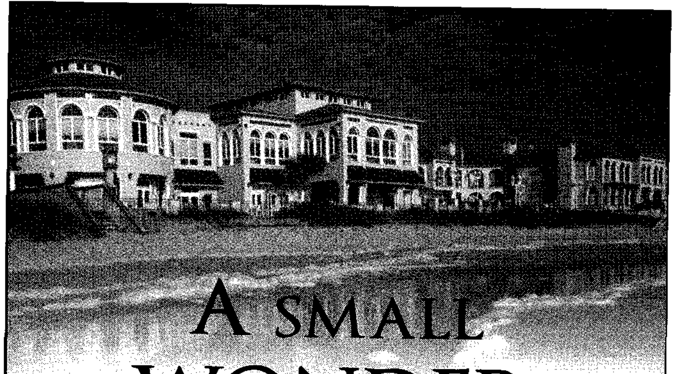

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ings die without other people noticing, and I understood that I could meet the same fate that night. When they found my corpse, with its stack of cash and its mysterious single pill, they would ask themselves, "Where were we when he needed us? Why didn't we deflower him before he perished?"

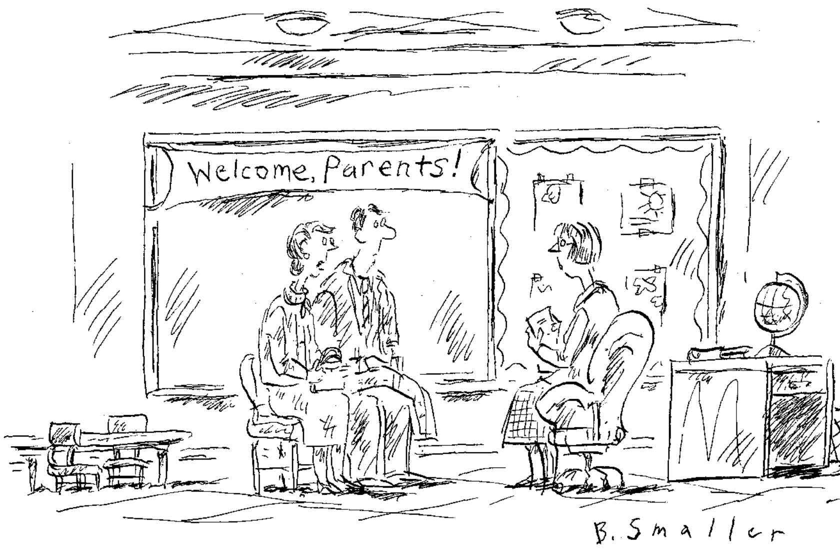
The man stood up and tottered toward me. The shoulders of his jacket extended almost to his elbows, as though he had abruptly shrunk; a purple tie grew out of his shirt; he wore a little hat with a mangy feather stuck in its band. He sat down at my table, mumbling a greeting. I turned back toward the bar, looking again for a bartender. The man grumbled and gibbered, pointing toward the bar, and I nodded understandingly. The sounds gradually formed sentences, punctuated by an occasional snort or the sound of his hand slamming the table. I could not figure out whether he was pissed off or pleased by my presence in his lair.

Eventually, a waitress planted two large foaming steins between us. She put a warm hand on my shoulder, asking, apparently, if I was O.K. She was so voluminous her face seemed upholstered; she smelled of cake and cookies. The drunk raised his glass and held it in front of me until I clinked it with mine. We drank and wiped the foam off our lips with the backs of our hands. He sighed in approval; I exhaled. We drank and smoked in silence.

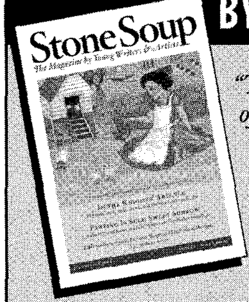
More beer came, and the man decided to open up to me: he leaned forward and back, he waved his hands in derision, he pointed his finger in various directions, and then he started crying, tears streaming down his cheeks, which were webbed with capillaries.

"Everything is O.K.," I said. "Everything will be fine." But he just shook his head. There seemed to be no hope or relief for him. The waitress came over, distributed more beer, and dabbed at his face with her dishrag, as though she were used to cleaning his tear-crusted cheeks. The bar was dark and empty; I was drunk. The waitress wiped glasses listlessly behind the bar; time passed in silence. "What will become of the world when you leave?" Rimbaud wrote. "No matter what happens, no trace of now will remain." I started crying, too.

By the time I left Bar, my sleeve was wet with tears and snot. I could recall the waitress wiping my face at least once with her rag that stank of rancid dishwater. I gave her what seemed to me a large chunk of the freezer money and she locked the door behind me. The man was still inside, his head carefully deposited in a clearing in the forest of steins. As I stepped out onto the vacant streets of Murska Sobota, a wave of euphoria surged through me. This was experience: I had lost my head and participated in a spontaneous outpouring of emotion; I had drunk with a disgusting stranger, as Rimbaud surely had in Paris, once upon a time; I had said fuck the fuck off to the responsible



"Andy plays perfectly well with others—it's others who don't play well with Andy."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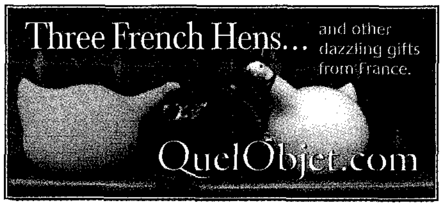
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"Oh, them? They're old bankruptcy."

life my parents had in store for me; I had spent time in the underworld of Murska Sobota and emerged soaked with sweat and tears; I had a magic pill in my pocket. I needed someone to love me tonight.

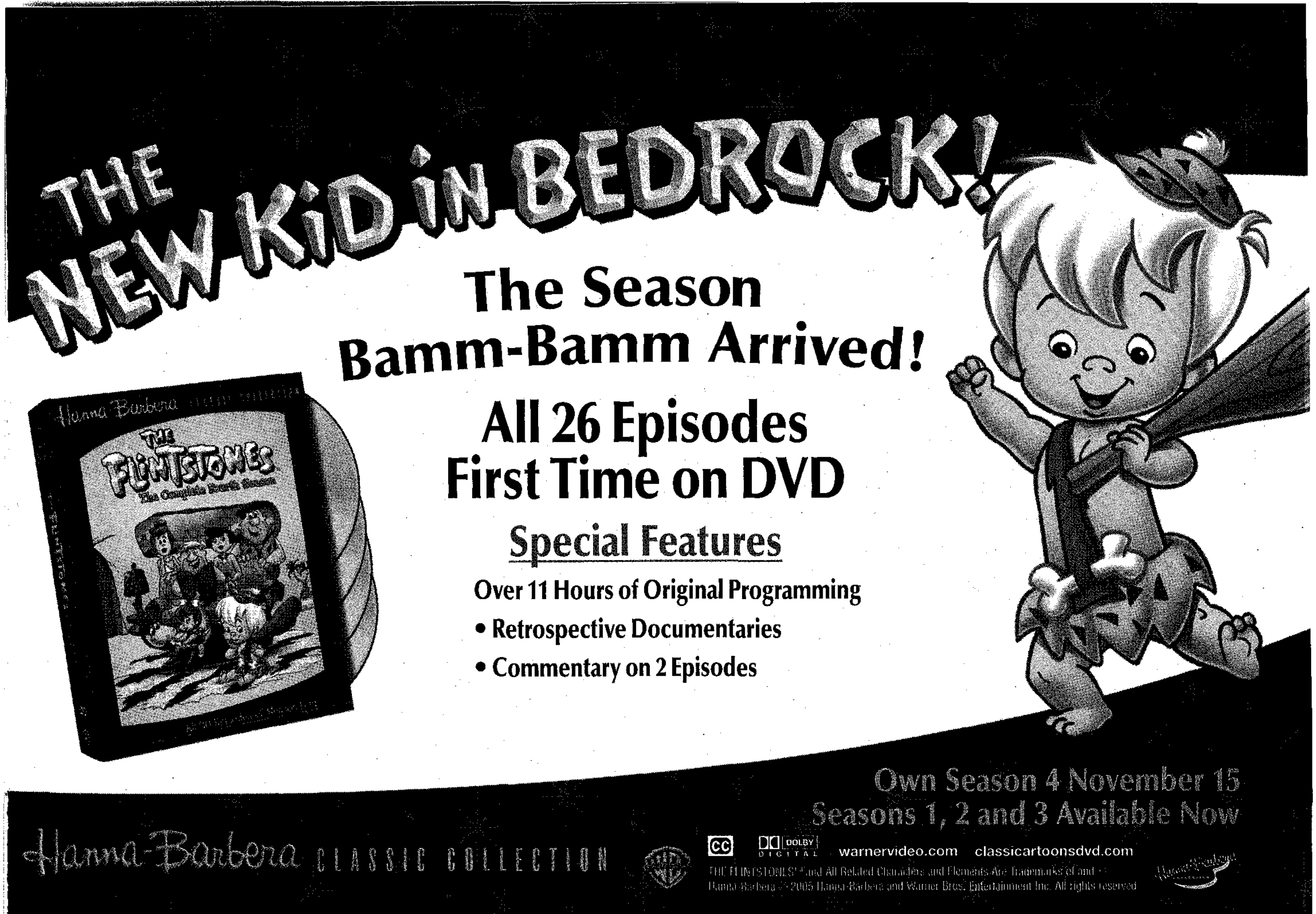
I found myself in a park infused with the dung-and-straw smell of budding trees and fledgling grass. At the center of the park, there was a copper-green statue of a partisan with a rifle pointed at the darkened treetops. A man in a fur hat held a leash under a weak gas lamp while his Irish setter ran in circles with an imaginary friend, stopping every so often to look up hopefully at its owner. The fur hat was the same auburn color as the dog, and for a moment I thought the man was wearing a dead puppy on his head. Just beyond the reach of the light, a couple were groping, their hands stuck deep inside each other.

I was just giving up on finding love when, at a pedestrian crossing, I spotted two young women, arm in arm, neatly clad in long coats. Their heels clacked as they crossed the street toward me; they giggled and chattered, their faces made up, their hair dewed with sourceless glimmer. One of them had a long, narrow chin; the other had big, dark eyes. They cut across the park at a brisk pace, avoiding the unlit edges. I followed them. They left the park and took the main street, down which a cistern truck crawled; two men in high rubber boots were washing the street with snaky hoses. The asphalt glistened; the women scuttled across the border between wet and dry. The strong stream from one of the hoses rushed toward my shoes and soaked them, so that when I entered dry territory I left footprints behind.

Abruptly, the women stopped in front of the appliance store and examined my illuminated freezer. One of them turned to look at me, and, in panic, I stopped at a travel-agency window with a crude faded collage of sunny islands in the Adriatic, photographed from above. The women started walking again, quickening their pace until it matched the beating of my heart. It was impossible to turn back now, for we were bound together in this absurd pursuit. They turned the corner, and I ran after them, sure that we were finally reaching our goal.

Around the corner, they were standing with a man dressed in denim, his large shovel-shaped hands resting comfortingly on their shoulders as they pointed at me. He smiled and called me over, and for an insane instant I thought that they were inviting me to party with them, but then he started unambiguously sprinting toward me. I took off at the speed of fear, charging down the main street, splashing through puddles. Lighter than a cork, I danced forth on the waves. I did not dare turn to see where my pursuer was, but I heard his big feet hitting the ground steadily behind me. Oh, the horror of your body not living up to the intensity of your fear—no matter how fast I wanted to run, my feet moved slowly, slipping on the wet pavement. At some point, he abandoned the pursuit, but I kept running.

The Hotel Evropa emerged before me on a wholly unfamiliar street. Soaked to the bone, I savagely pushed and pulled the entrance door, until Franc, miserable in the middle of his twenty-four-hour shift, unlocked it for me. I crept past him, focussing on each of my steps so as not to appear drunk. I pressed the elevator button and waited patiently, while my center of gravity rode the surf of my inebriation. I would have waited all night, for I did not want to exhibit my wobblability, let alone ascend the eternal stairs to the fifth floor, but Franc barked at me that the elevator was



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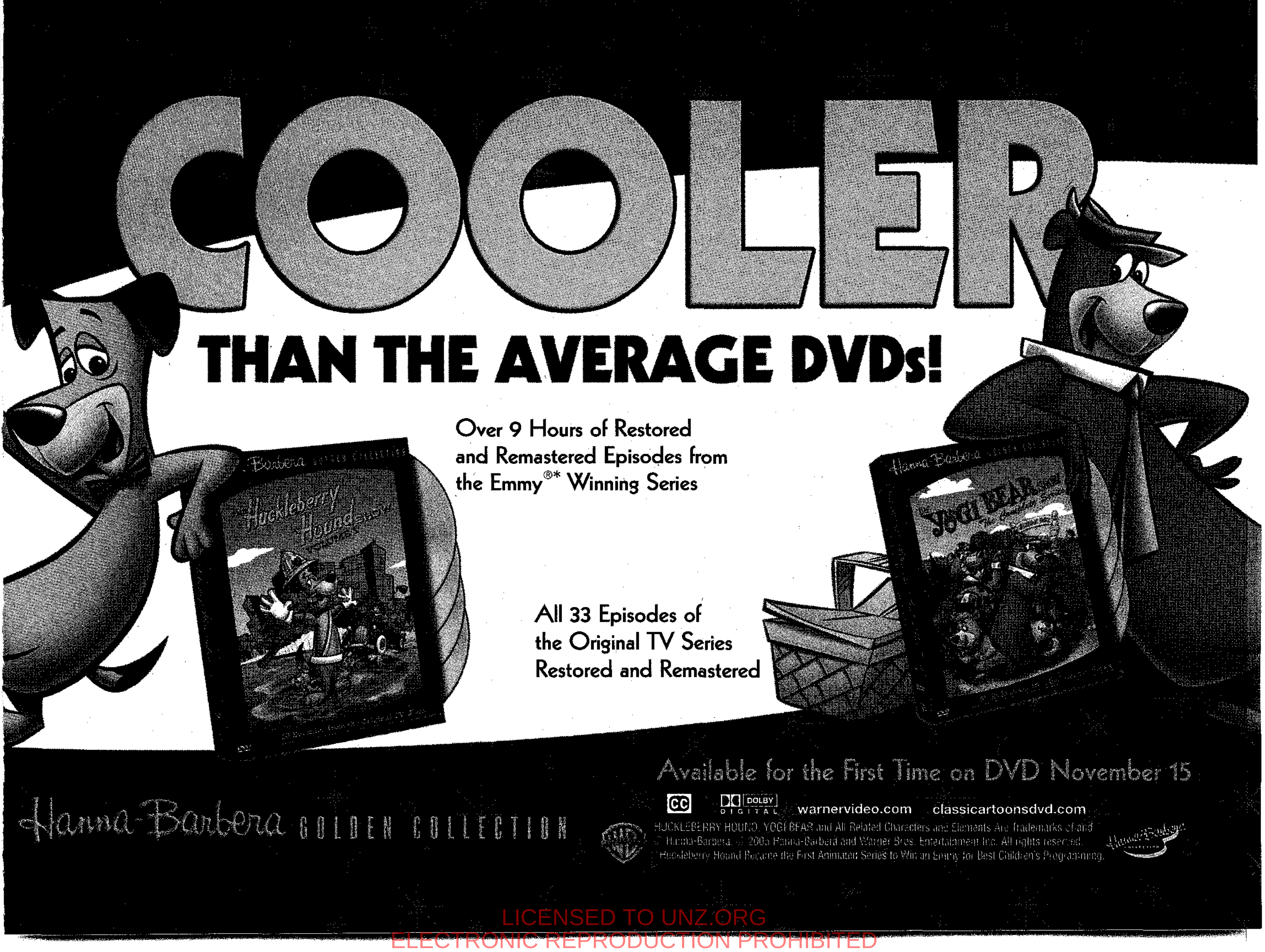

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already there—indeed, the door was wide open. I stepped into it and rode upward, inhaling the smell of my own sweat like a firefighter taking in oxygen.

The key would not enter the lock, no matter how hard I pushed. Everything was wrong: I kicked the door with my knee, and then with my foot, and then again and again. Need I say it hurt? Need I say that the pain made everything worse? Need I say that I was terrified when I heard the lock turning and the door opened and there stood Elizabeth, pulling the flaps of a peignoir over her uncoverable breasts? Her skin glowed, her tresses were ruffled; she smelled of dreams. "How can I help you?" is what she probably said. I said nothing. Her husband was snoring so loudly that I thought he was faking it, the pitiful coward. She looked straight into my eyes; in her eyes there was love. I wanted to take hold of her hand, with its rings like bejewelled palaces; I wanted to kiss her; I wanted her to leave her stertorous husband and cultivate me in the garden of my youth. All I needed to spark a conflagration of our heated bodies was the right word. So I said, "Pill?"

"Excuse me?" she said.

I excavated the pill from my change pocket and offered it to her on the palm of my hand—it was tiny in its cutout piece of packaging. She looked at it, baffled, then turned around to check whether her unwitting husband was still asleep.

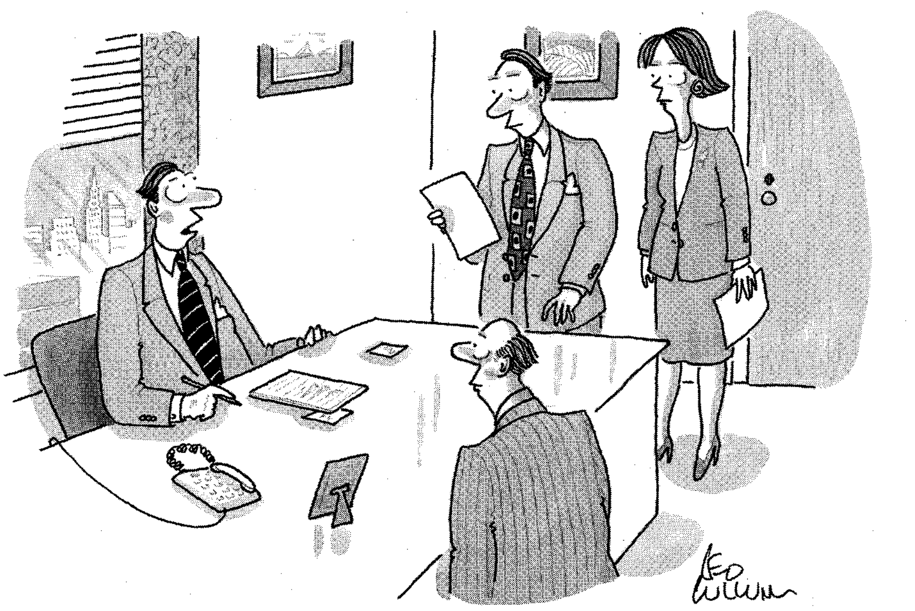
"What is it, honey?" the husband called, stirring. I quickly put the pill back in my pocket. Seeing that, as young as I was, I was a considerate gentleman, Elizabeth flashed a barely perceptible smile, and I understood that we were in it together now. So when the husband came to the door in his baseball-patterned pajamas, I said, as innocently as I could, "Maybe you have pill? For head?" I pointed at my head, lest there be any confusion as to whose head we were talking about.

"No, I am sorry," Elizabeth said and started closing the door.

"Maybe aspirin?" I said. "One aspirin? Aspirin?"

She shut the door and turned the lock twice. Clearly, I had not said the right word. I had not considered this outcome. I was sure that we had connected, that electricity had flowed between our trembling bodies. Swaying before the cruelly closed door, I wanted to knock, to clarify to Elizabeth that, yes, I was in love with her, and that, no, I didn't mind that she was married. I didn't do it; the door was as closed as closed can be. I could hear them murmuring conspiratorially, like husband and wife, and I recognized that love was on the other side, and I had no access to it.

But the beauty of youth is that reality never quells desire, so when I entered my room I left the door ajar, in case Elizabeth suddenly decided to tiptoe across the hallway. Every now and then, I peered out, hoping to see her door slowly opening,



"I thought it was legal—I wrote it on a legal pad."

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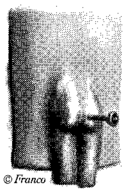
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hoping to see her lustfully scurrying my way. I was peering out for the third or fourth time when Franc strode out of the elevator, stopped at Elizabeth's door, and knocked. She opened it, whispered something, and pointed at me. For one last delusional moment, I thought that she had called him up to ask about me—and there I stood in the crack of my door, grinning like a happy dog.

Franc charged over and pushed my door open. With a flashing swing of his hand from his hip to my face, he slapped me. My cheek burned, my eyes filled with fiery tears. I retreated toward the bed, stumbled, and fell on the floor. Franc kicked me and kept kicking me: I felt the tip of his shoe sinking into the flesh of my buttocks and thighs, then pounding against my ribs and coccyx.

The floor stank of machine oil. Franc didn't kick me in the face, although he could have. He spat not on me but on the floor next to me. He didn't yell; he just snarled and growled. The rapid fire of kicks, it seemed, was not easy on him; when he finally stopped, he was panting. As he left, he calmly told me that if he heard the tiniest peep out of me he would beat me to a pulp and pull me by my ears onto the street and let the police have fun with me all night long. He was a good, if unpleasant, man, Franc was. He even slowly, carefully closed the door behind him.

I lay in the dark, unable to move, and finally fell asleep. The fluorescent lights in the hall hummed; the elevator thudded going up, coming down. I dreamed of war, of might and right, of utterly unforeseeable logic. I woke up wishing I were home, waking to the smell of French toast and my father's aftershave and my sister's banana shampoo. The weather forecast would be on the radio (my parents liked to know the future), my sister pouting because she couldn't listen to her music program. I would walk in and derisively submit to my mother's kiss. Breakfast would be ready.

I stood up and unpacked my mother's chicken-and-pepper sandwich. It was stale, the peppers mushy and bitter. I turned on the lights, found my notebook, and, after staring at the blank page for a long time, I wrote a poem called "Love and Obstacles." The first lines were: "There are walls between the world and me, / and I have to walk through them to get to you."

My body coated in a dull, bruised pain, I went to the store and delivered the money to Stanko. He had a steel-wool beard, and the veins bulged on his hands as he counted and recounted the money. I was short a few dinars and told him that I had been robbed on the train: two brazen criminals had emptied my pockets but had failed to find the rest of the money in my bag. Stanko stared at me until he believed me, then shook his head, appalled at a world that stole from its children. He made a note on the form in front of him, then showed me where to sign. He shook my hand earnestly and heartily, as though congratulating me. When he offered me a cigarette, I took it and asked for another. We examined the freezer. Stanko seemed proud of it, as though he had created it himself. It was impressive: enormous, blazing white, and coffinlike in its emptiness; it smelled of clean, subzero death. It would come to us in two or three weeks, he said, and if it didn't we should call him.

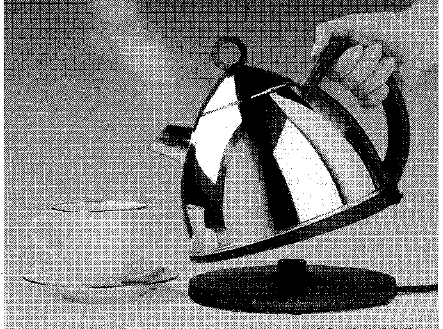
I slept on the bus and I slept on the night train, waking up only when my stomach started growling, and when my body stiffened and started hurting again. I had no money to buy food, so I simply relived the chicken-and-pepper sandwich. Dawn was ascending; my compartment was freezing cold. I saw a horse grazing alone in a field, inexplicably wrapped in nylon; a copse of trees like toothpick tombstones; clouds on the horizon filled with an eternity of tears. When I arrived home, breakfast was waiting.

That day, my mother washed the jeans I had worn in Murska Sobota. The pill in my pocket disintegrated—nothing was left but a nugget of foil and plastic. The freezer arrived seventeen days later. We filled it to the brim with veal and pork, lamb and beef, chicken and peppers. When the war began, in the spring of 1992, and the electricity in the city of Sarajevo was cut off, everything in the freezer thawed and rotted in less than a week. ♦

BLOCK THAT METAPHOR!

From the Waterville (Maine) Morning Sentinel.

"We've got a sink hole here and we're bleeding and I would say we have to bite the bullet and do it now," Aucoin said.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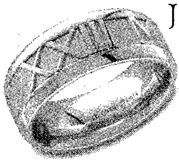
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XII XI MCMXCVIII
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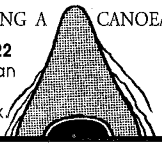
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[Explore] *Tumi*

Design That Travels

TUMI's T3 Collection

Turning heads in airports from Heathrow to Hong Kong, Tumi's T3 collection breaks out of the confines of the "black box" luggage mentality. All of the features in the T3 collection reflect what Tumi CEO Laurence Franklin refers to as "the ultimate expression of form and function."

Sculptural and ergonomic, "the collection delivers great performance with styling that makes heads turn," says Franklin. Already popular with models and fashion editors, "T3 appeals to the consumer who is interested in design and wants luggage that reflects a forward-thinking aesthetic. We're living in a sophisticated design culture, and the use of metal and softer detailing was inspired by visual innovations found in high-design categories such as sporting goods, cars, and home products. With this collection," he explains, "Tumi tilts the balance to the visual and emotional side without compromising functionality."

The design world has taken notice: In 2004, the year the collection made its debut, *ID* magazine gave T3 a *Design Distinction* award. It also won a *JIDPO Good Design Award* from the Japanese industrial design organization.

T3's seventeen stylish pieces are all sheathed in Hybrix, an ultra-durable, abrasion-resistant, water and tear-resistant, stain proof fabric. Styles that appeal to both men and women include totes, backpacks, and business cases as well as duffels, garment bags, and wheeled suitcases. Most feature a contoured frame of molded foam side panels with aluminum and black trim.

Initially consumers had a choice of two colors: Black or Aluminum accented with brushed aluminum hardware. This fall, Tumi adds a new color, Bullion, which is edged in gold and has a complimentary colored body fabric.

Innovation on Wheels

Tumi holds more than twenty-five patents for design and engineering. Two of them—a unique pivoting handle and Hybrix material—are exclusive to T3.

The asymmetrical telescoping handle rises out of the back of the wheeled styles like a periscope eye and can be rotated to adjust the grip for a right or left-handed user. The wheeled products also feature Tumi's patented pop-up bar, for securing another bag atop the case. Then it's easy rolling, on Euro-style wheels that glide like in-line skates. As Franklin says, "whoever thought performance could be this sexy?"

TUMI Store Locations

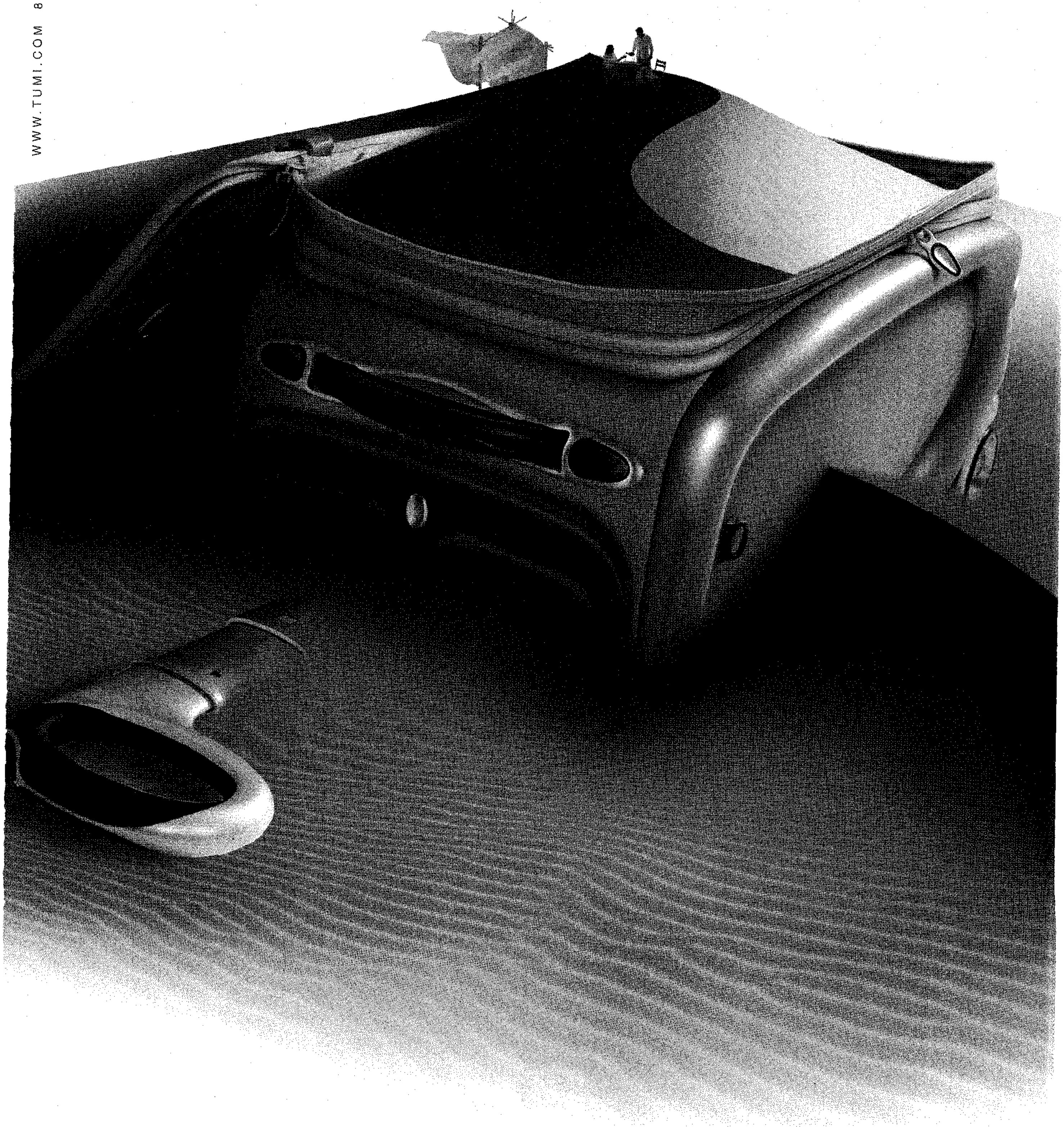
U.S.
Atlanta, GA
Charlotte, NC
Chicago, IL
Costa Mesa, CA
Dallas, TX
Denver, CO
Detroit/Troy, MI
Honolulu, HI
Houston, TX
Las Vegas, NV
Los Angeles, CA
Miami, FL
Naples, FL
New York, NY
Palm Beach, FL
Phoenix, AZ
Roosevelt Field, NY
Short Hills, NJ
Stamford, CT
San Antonio, TX
San Diego, CA
San Francisco, CA
San Jose, CA
San Juan, PR
Seattle, WA
Tampa, FL
Washington,
Wellesley, MA
White Plains,

INTERNATIONA
Bangkok
Helsinki
Kuala Lumpur
London
Munich
Osaka
Paris
Seoul
Singapore
Sydney
Tokyo

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT TUMI, CALL 800.322.TUMI
OR VISIT WWW.TUMI.COM.

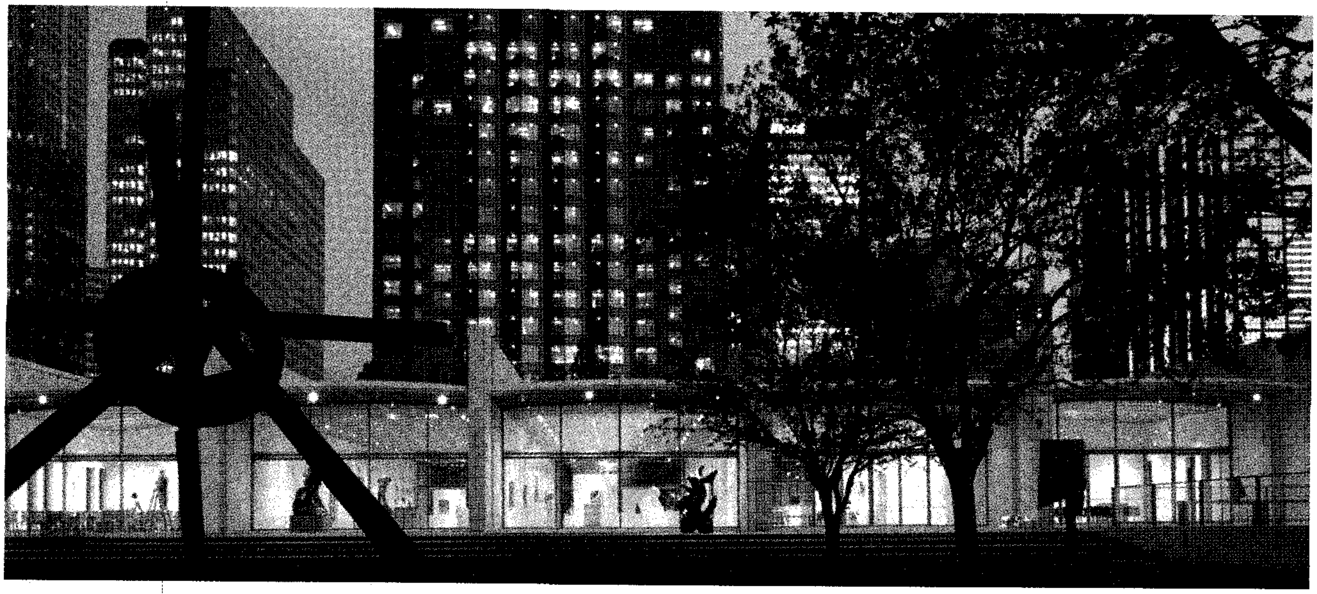
T3 COLLECTION

WWW.TUMI.COM 800.322.TUMI



TUMI

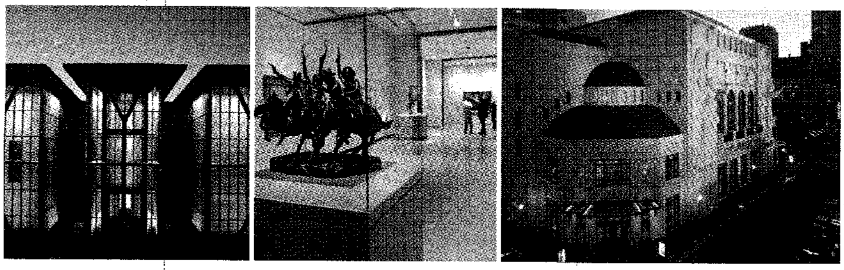
PARIS LONDON NEW YORK SAN FRANCISCO TOKYO



North Texas Arts Hub

Without question, Dallas-Fort Worth is ready to take its place among the finest arts destinations in the world. Visitors can explore more than forty major cultural institutions that showcase artistic works of every style and era.

The Dallas Arts District, on the north side of downtown, is the largest urban arts district in the nation. The Nasher Sculpture Center houses one of the foremost collections of twentieth-century sculpture in the world. Wander through the striking building designed by architect Renzo Piano, then stroll through the two-acre sculpture garden. Nearby, the Dallas Museum of Art and the Crow Collection of Asian Art invite you on a global tour of artistic treasures. Just beyond the Arts District, the Meadows Museum displays the most significant collection of Spanish art outside Spain.



The Fort Worth Cultural District occupies a park-like setting, where magnificent buildings stand among shade trees and wide expanses of lawn. The Kimbell Art Museum, architect Louis Kahn's revered creation, is famous for its parallel concrete vaults and lovely natural light. Across the street, view the city's newest jewel: the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. Walk up the hill to a world-class collection of American art at the Amon Carter Museum, designed by Philip Johnson. Don't miss the National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame or the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History.

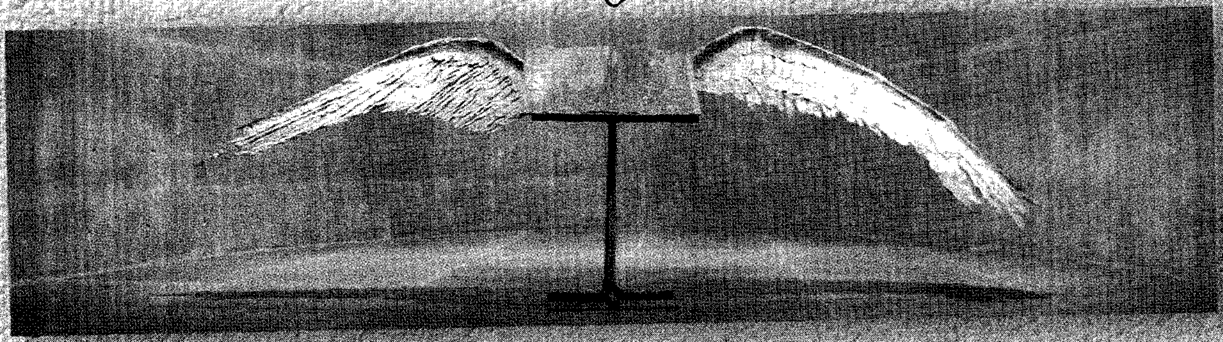
Consider spending an evening in one of Dallas-Fort Worth's majestic performance halls. The Meyerson Symphony Center, designed by I.M. Pei, is yet another icon in the Dallas Arts District. In Fort Worth, Bass Performance Hall is known for its twin, forty-eight-foot limestone angels. Both halls feature architecture and acoustics that rival any other performance space in the world.

Dallas-Fort Worth offers exceptional accommodations, fine restaurants, unique shopping venues, and other attractions, from Fort Worth's legendary Stockyards to Dallas' Fair Park and Sixth Floor Museum. Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport—midway between the two cities—makes travel by air quick and convenient.

It's easy to understand why Dallas-Fort Worth is the number one visitor destination in Texas—an essential stop on any arts traveler's itinerary.

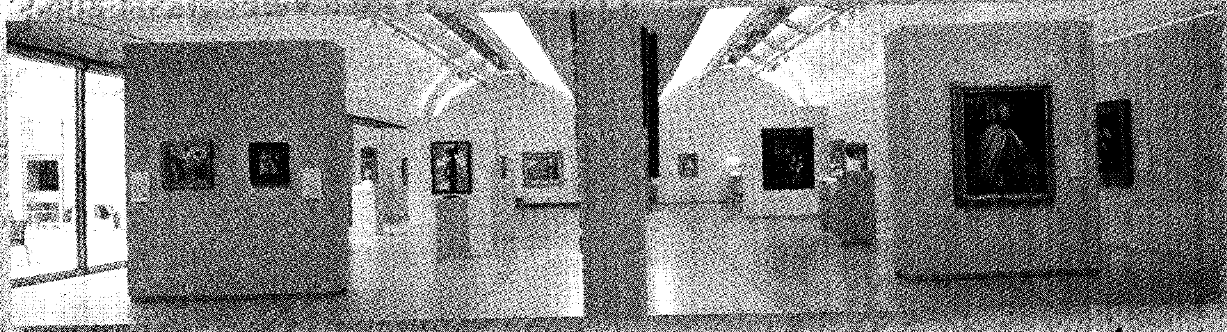
FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT DALLASFORTWORTHTRAVEL.COM

Joy.



Passion.

Wonder.

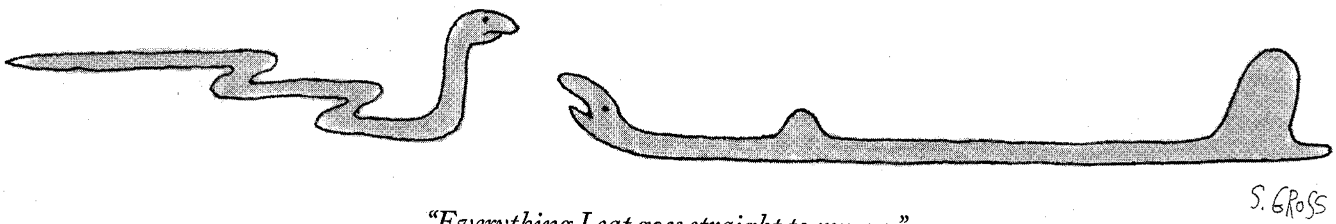


Just another ordinary afternoon in Dallas-Fort Worth.

Find the inspiration you seek in Dallas-Fort Worth, one of the great destinations in the world of art. Explore our spectacular new landmarks, the Nasher Sculpture Center and the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. Discover a sophisticated metropolitan area overflowing with five-star restaurants, world-class shopping, beautiful hotels, unique attractions, and Western heritage. Your journey begins at www.dallasfortworthtravel.com.

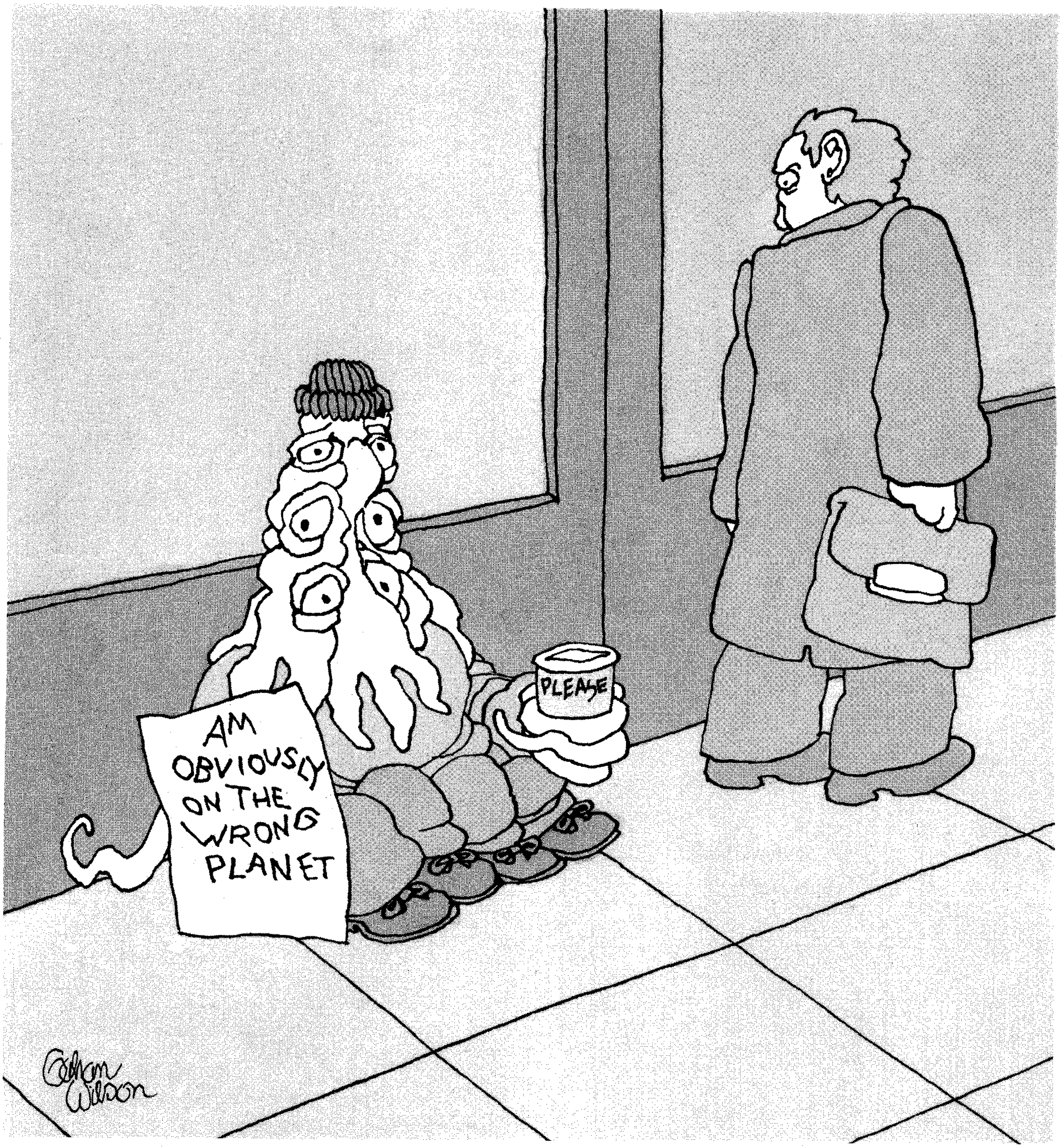
DALLAS FORT WORTH
www.dallasfortworthtravel.com

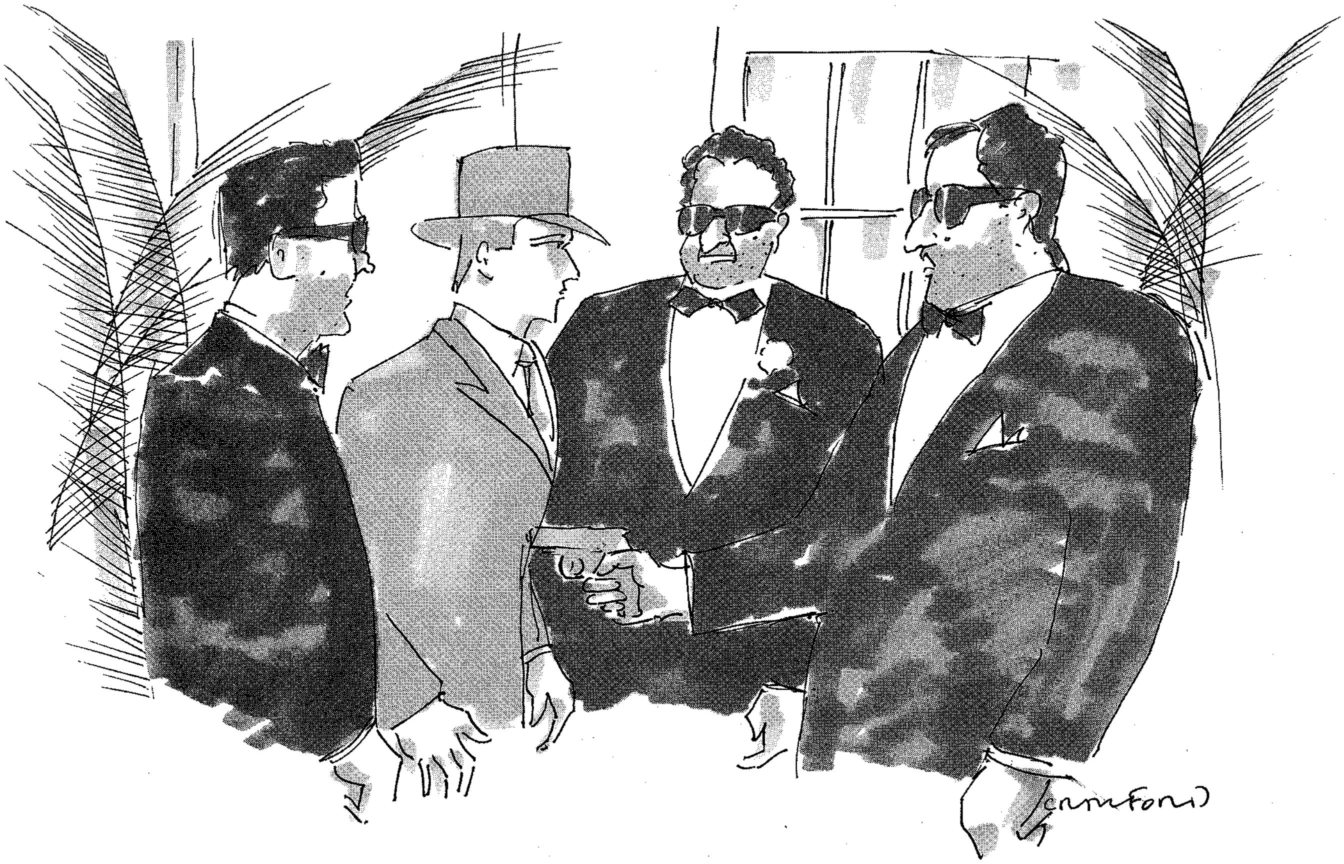
Anselm Kiefer, *Book with Wings*, 1992-94, lead, tin, and steel, 74 3/4 x 208 5/8 x 43 3/8 inches • Crow Collection Photo: Jowdy Photograpy • Kimbell Art Museum Photo: Gordon Trice



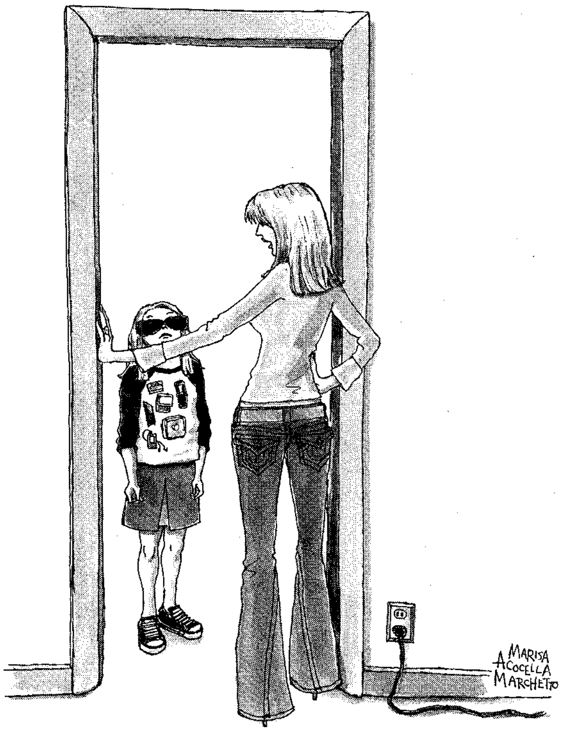
"Everything I eat goes straight to my ass."

THE FUNNIES

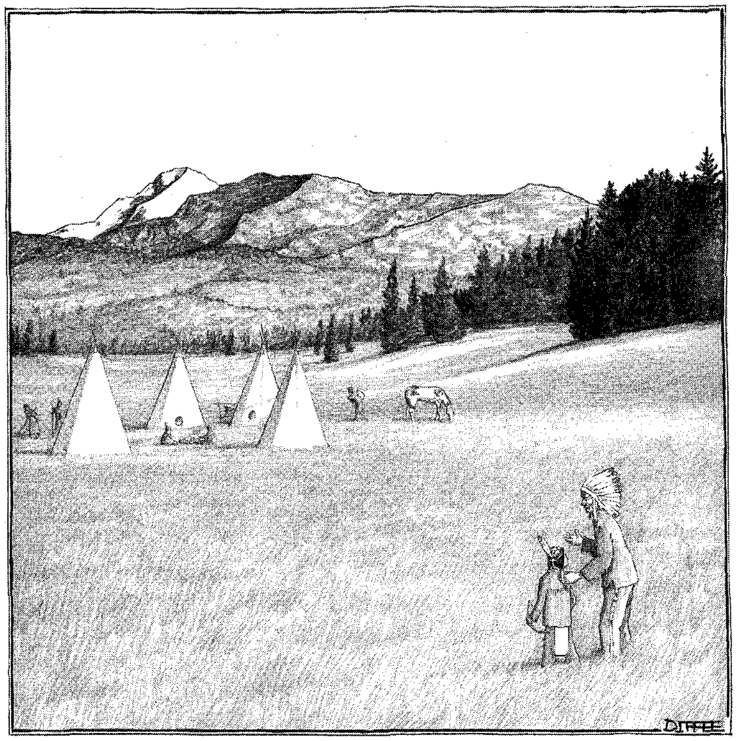

PLEASE
AM OBVIOUSLY ON THE WRONG PLANET



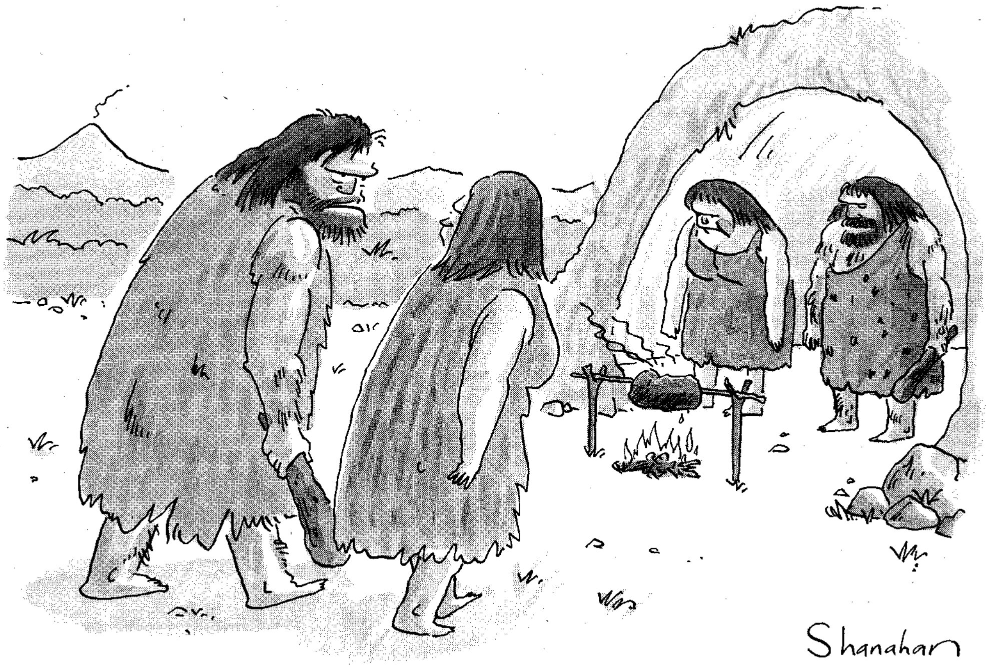
"We all moved to Brooklyn, Tommy. We like Brooklyn. And now you're going to move to Brooklyn, too."


Marisa Acocella Marchetto

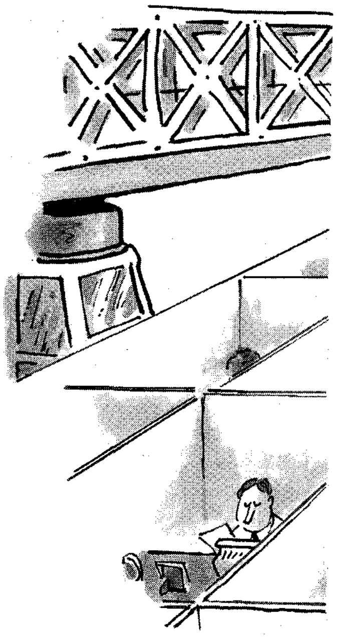
"Finish your homework, and then you can play with your entourage."

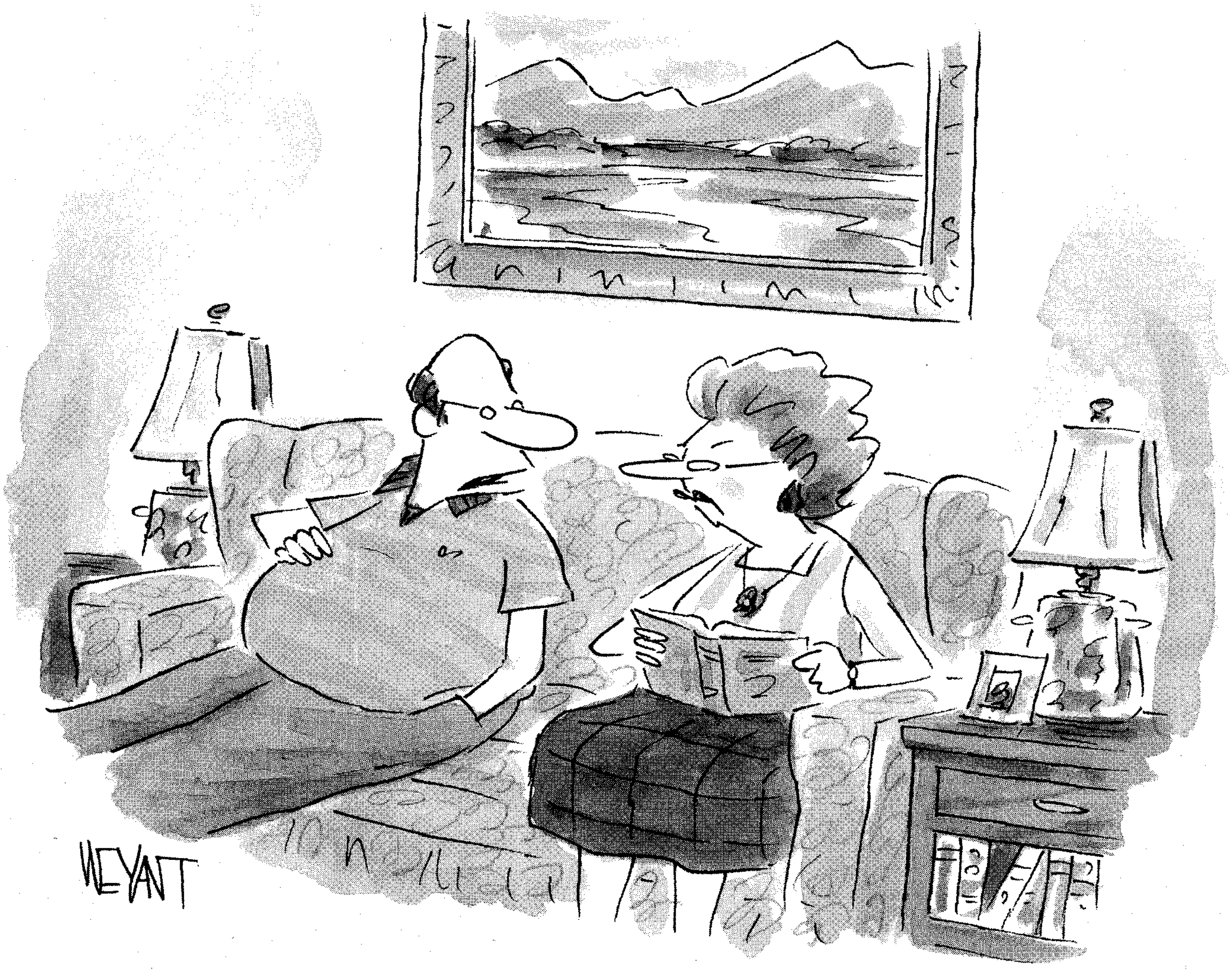


"I remember when all this was completely undeveloped."

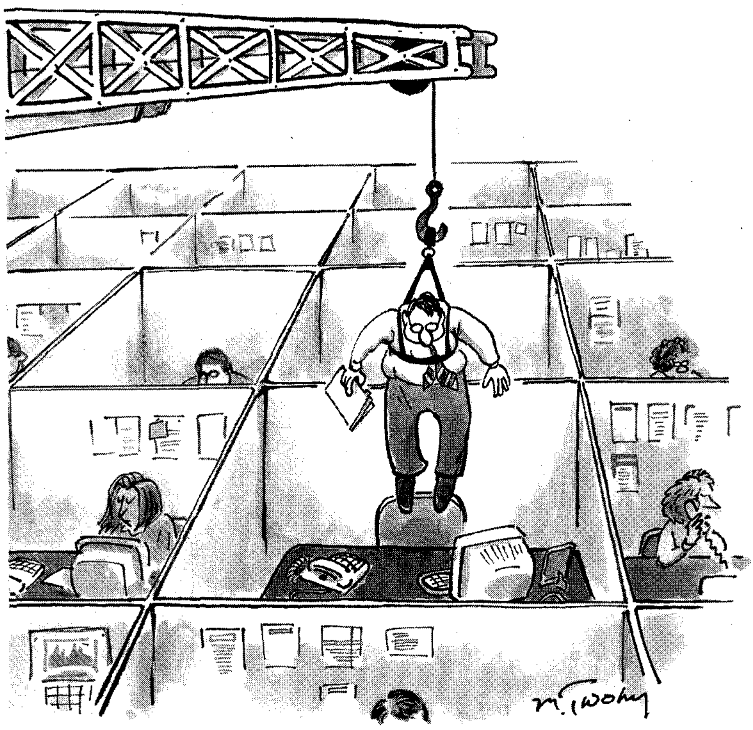


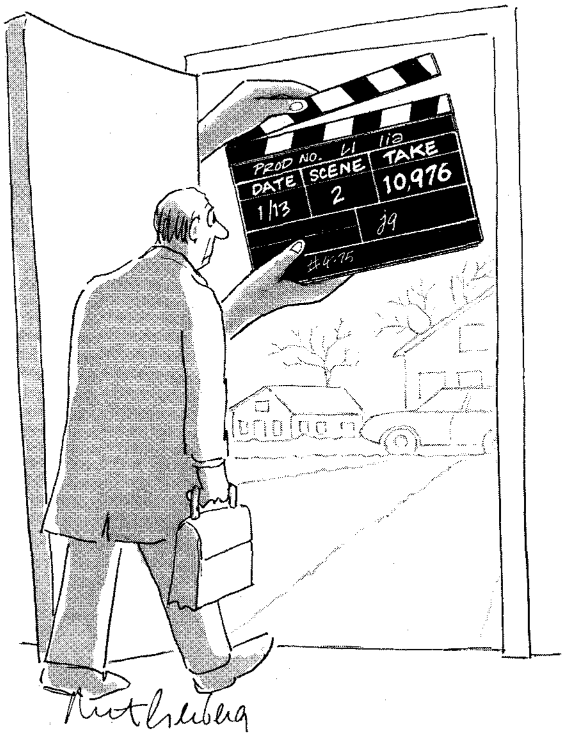
“I always forget—is it Kirsten or Kristin?”





“Do you want to feel the meatloaf kick?”

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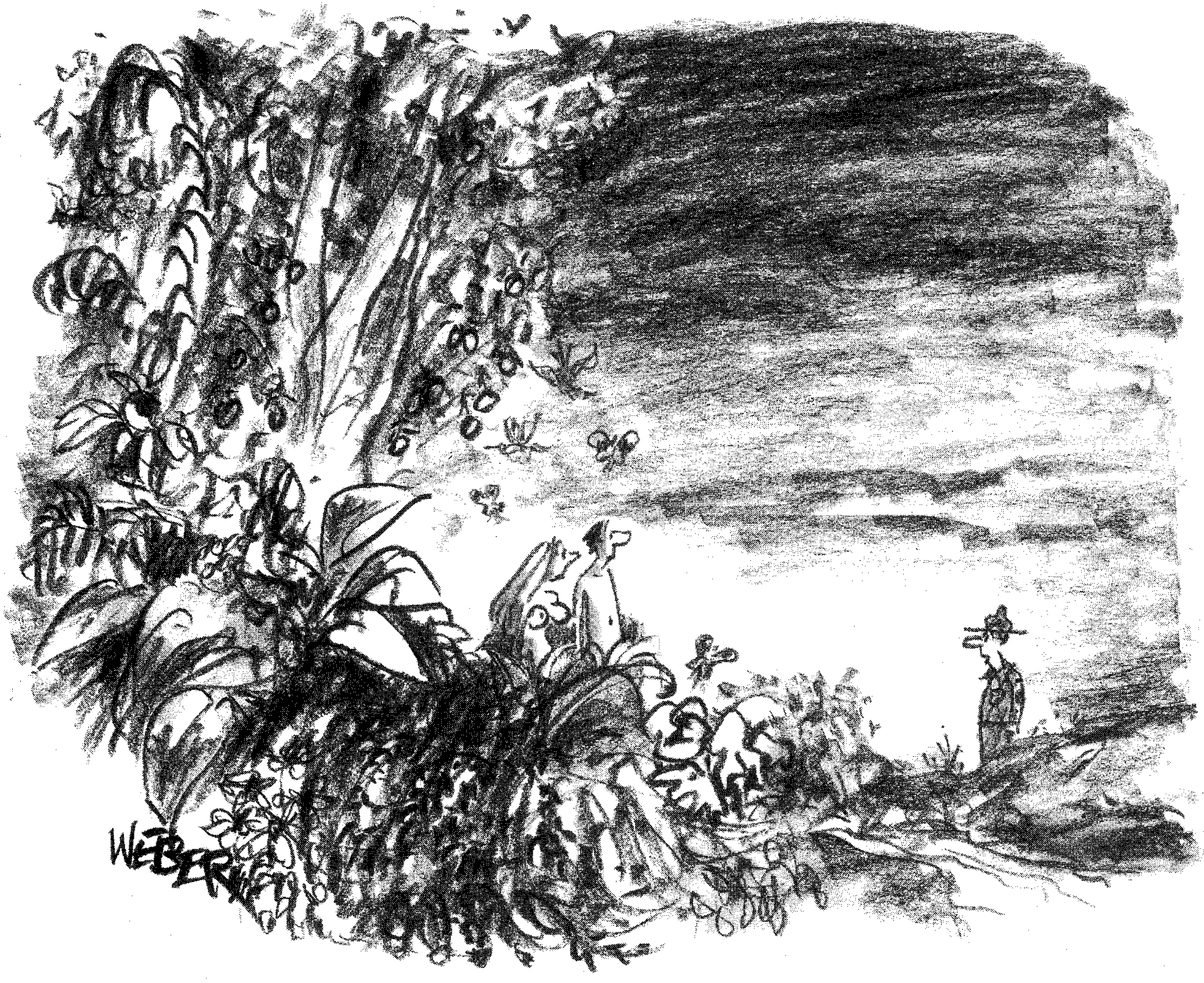
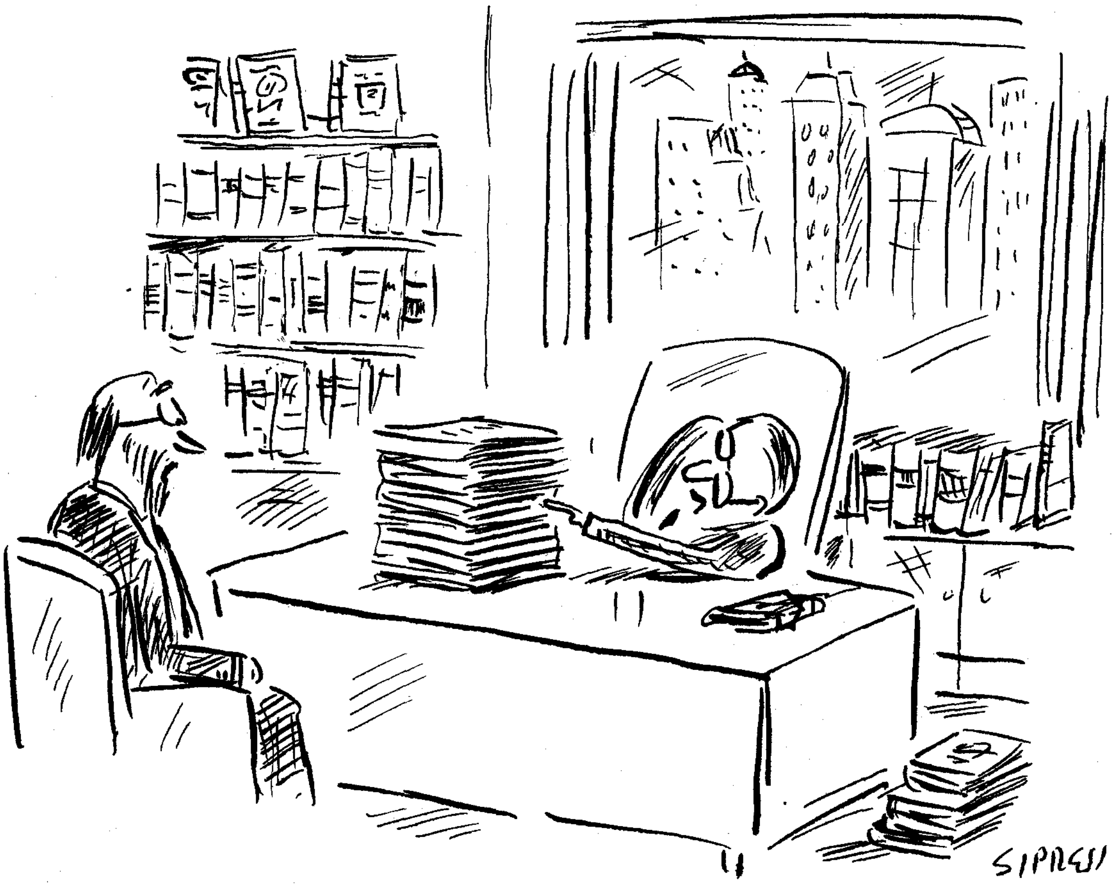
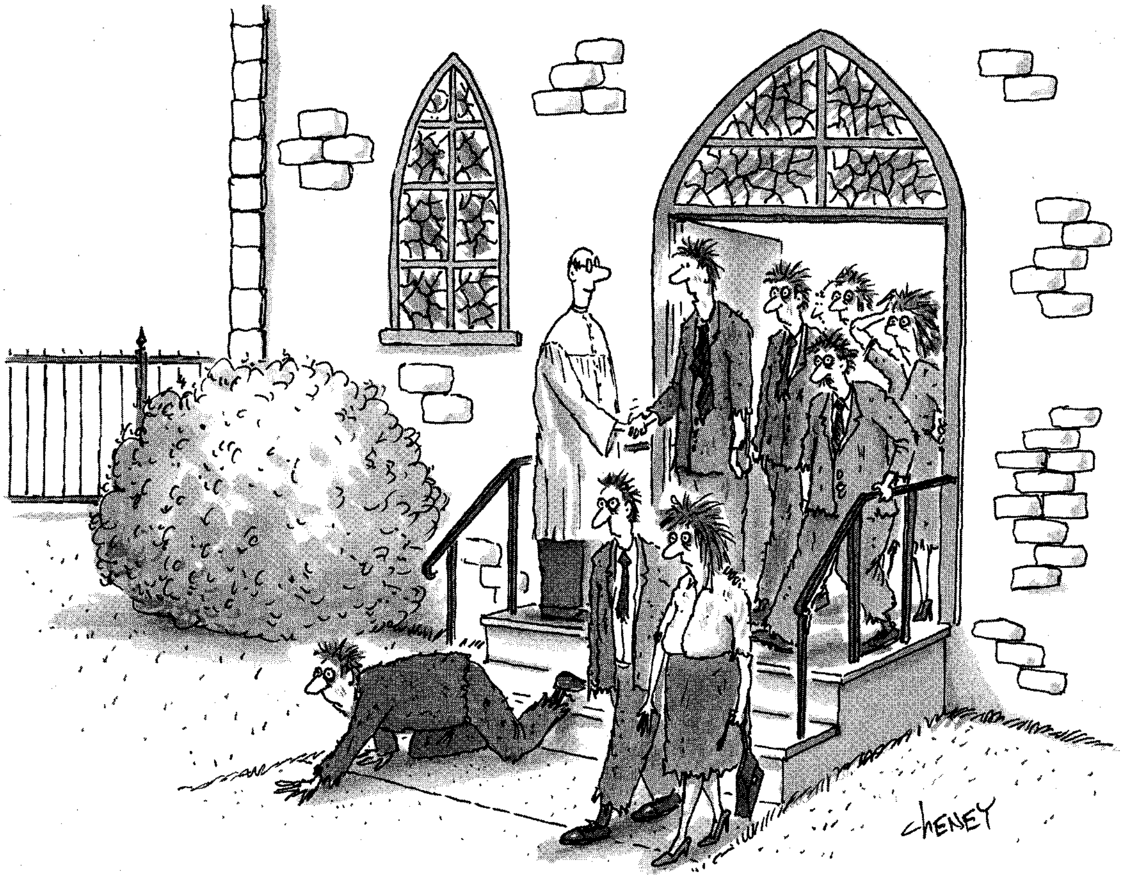
SCENE 2
TAKE 10,976
jg
#4-75



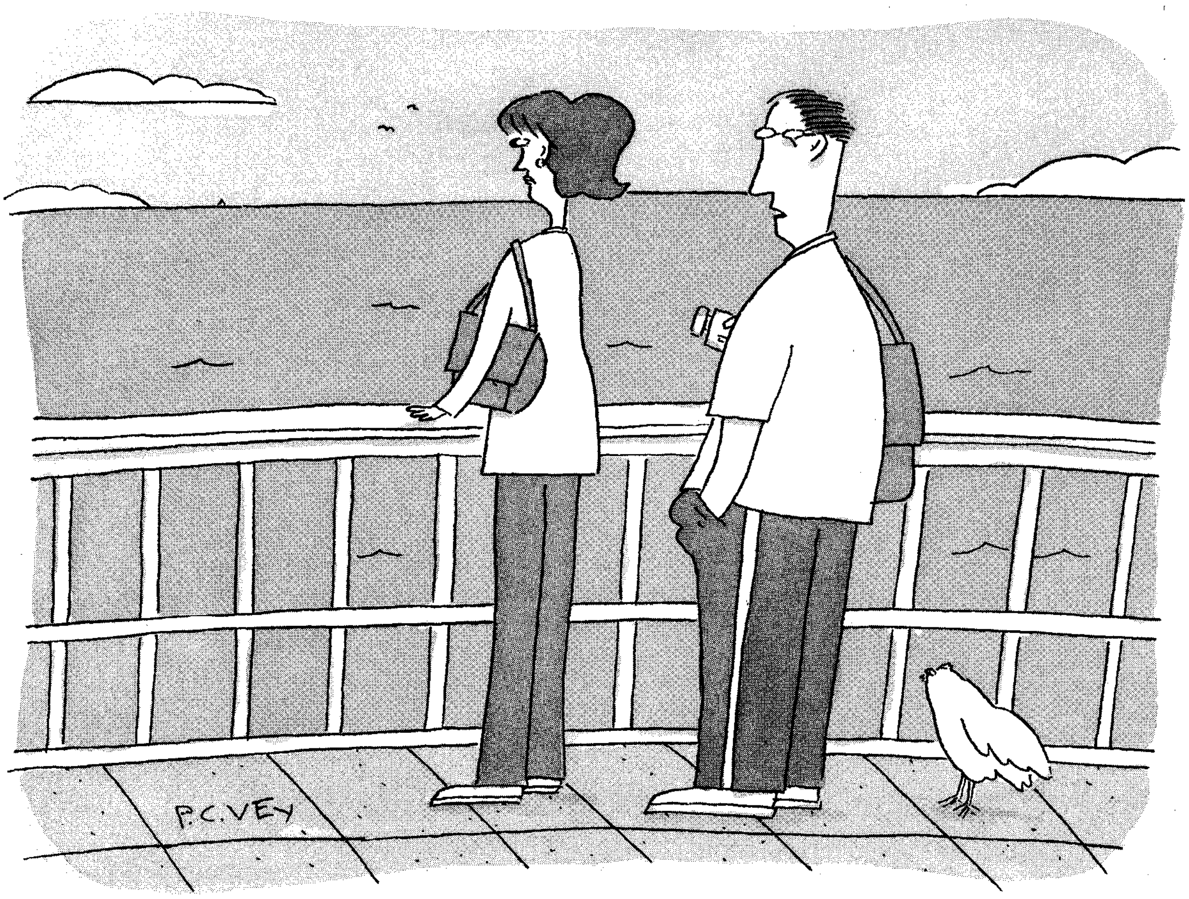
"I'm sorry, folks, but the park closes at sundown."



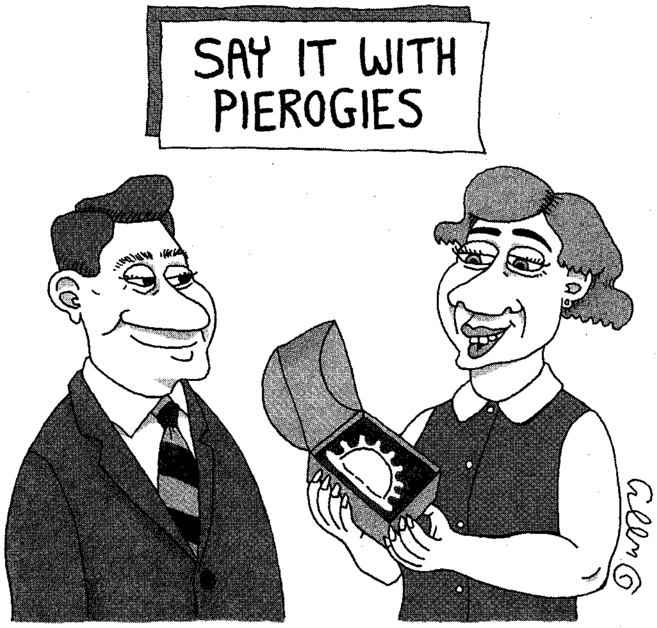
"Right here is where you lost the narrative flow."

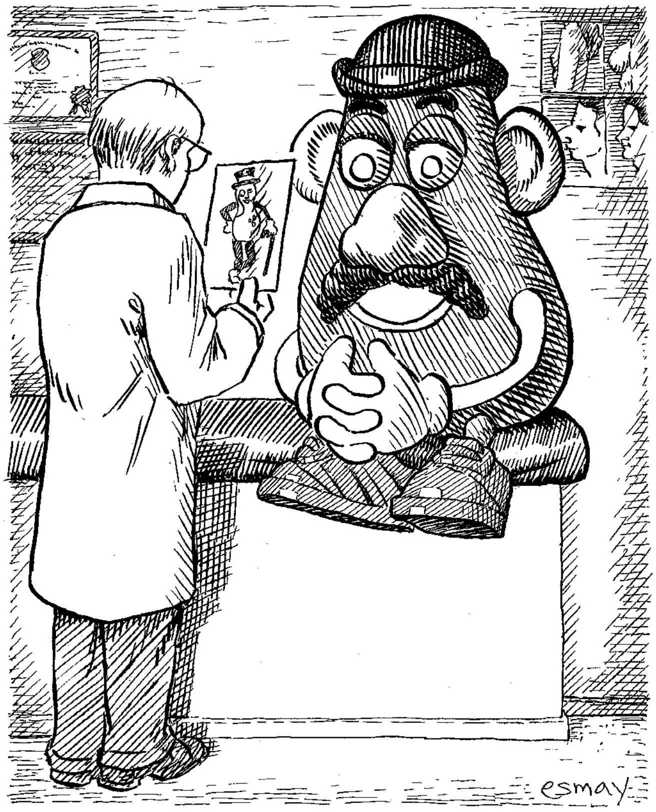


"Excellent sermon."

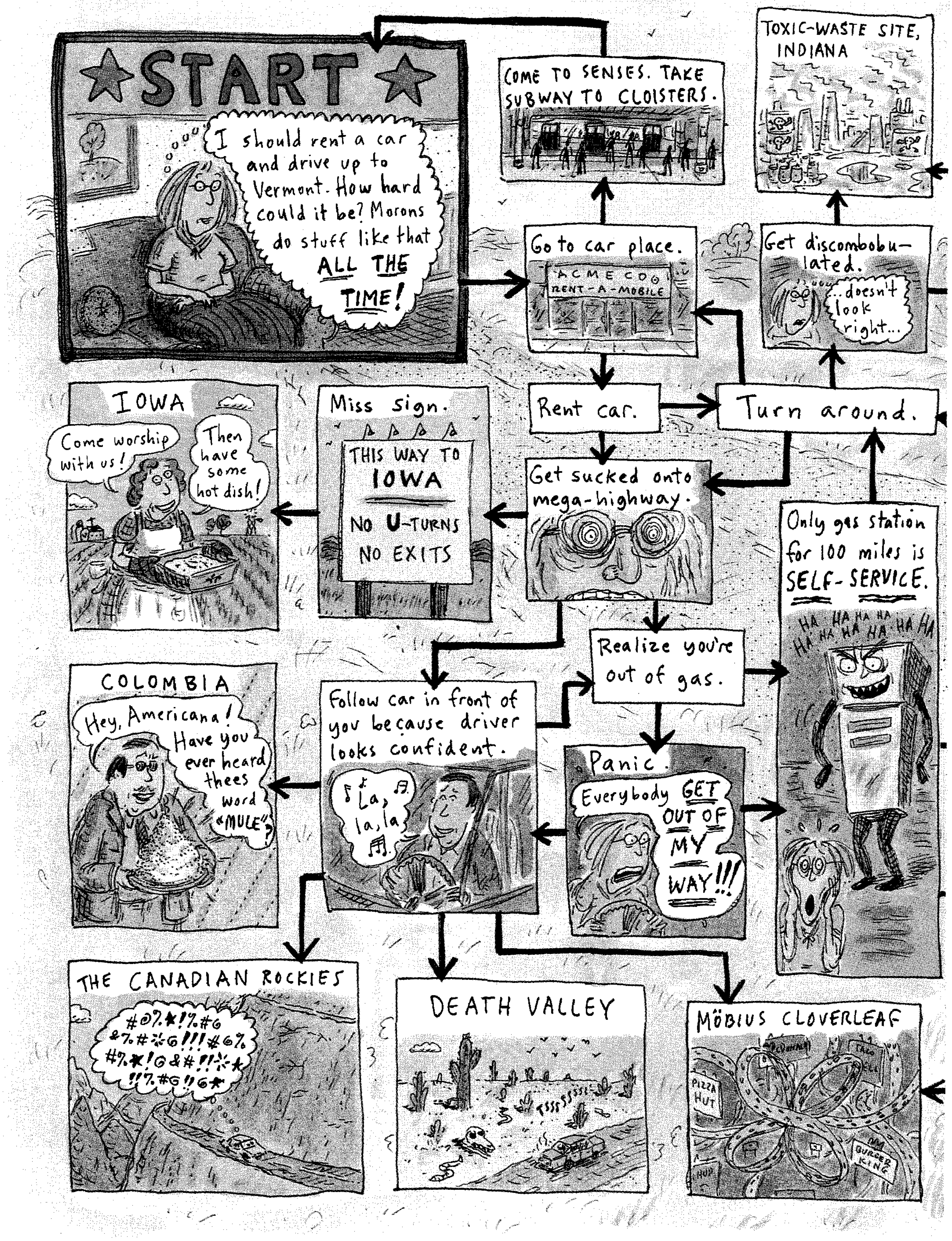


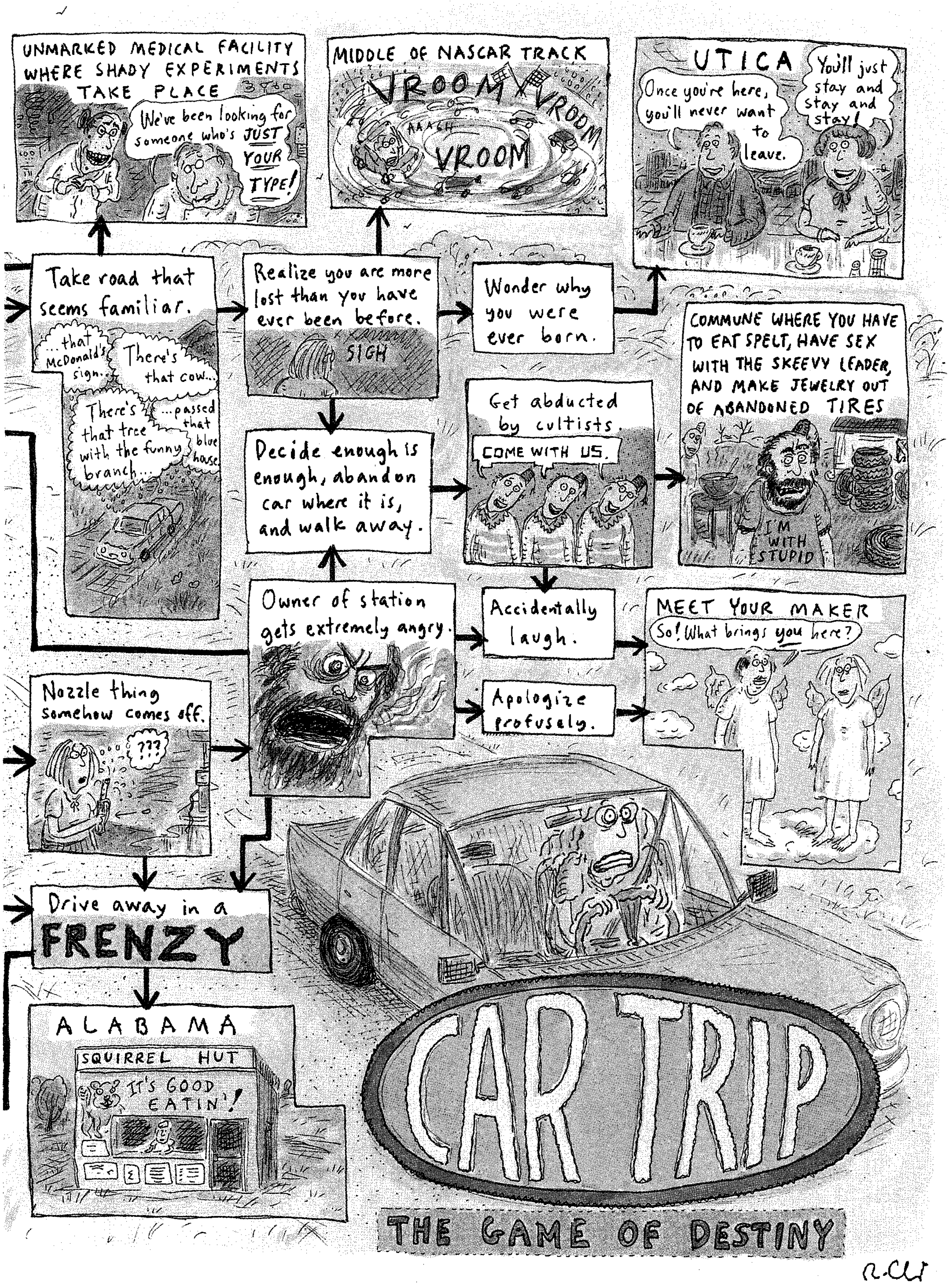
"Next vacation, let's leave the chicken home."


SAY IT WITH
PIEROGIES

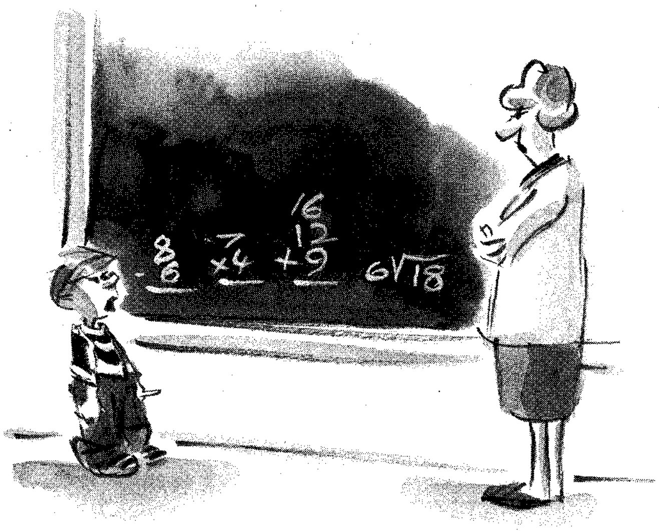


"Can you make me look like that?"

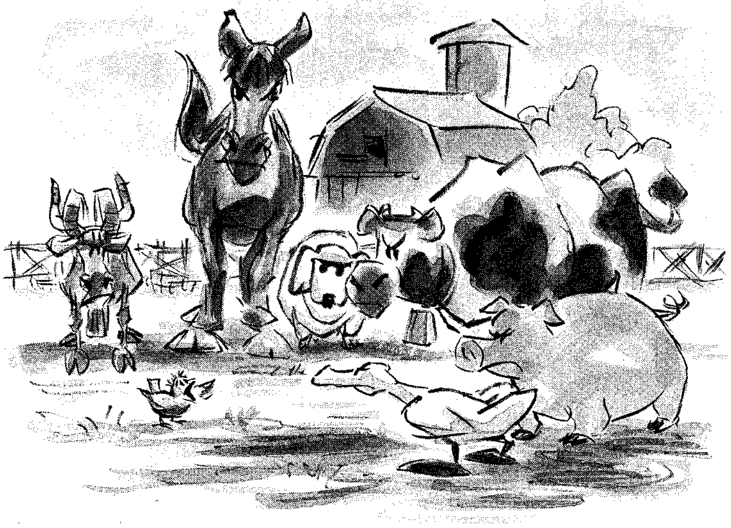

★START★
I should rent a car and drive up to Vermont. How hard could it be? Morons do stuff like that ALL THE TIME!
Come to senses. Take subway to Cloisters.
TOXIC-WASTE SITE, INDIANA
Go to car place.
ACME CO. RENT-A-MOBILE
Get discombobulated.
…doesn't look right…
IOWA
Come worship with us!
Then have some hot dish!
Miss sign.
THIS WAY TO IOWA
NO U-TURNS
NO EXITS
Rent car.
Turn around.
Get sucked onto mega-highway.
Only gas station for 100 miles is SELF-SERVICE.
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
Realize you're out of gas.
COLOMBIA
Hey, Americana! Have you ever heard thees word "MULE"?
Follow car in front of you because driver looks confident.
La, la, la
Panic.
Everybody GET OUT OF MY WAY!!!
THE CANADIAN ROCKIES
#@%★!%#@ &%#*@!!!#@% #%★!@&#!!*★ !!%#@!!@★
DEATH VALLEY
TSSSSSSSS
MÖBIUS CLOVERLEAF
PIZZA HUT
TACO BELL
BURGER KING
IHOP


CAR TRIP
THE GAME OF DESTINY
Take road that seems familiar.
...that McDonald's sign...
There's that cow...
There's that tree with the funny branch...
...passed that blue house...
UNMARKED MEDICAL FACILITY WHERE SHADY EXPERIMENTS TAKE PLACE
We've been looking for someone who's JUST YOUR TYPE!
Realize you are more lost than you have ever been before.
SIGH
MIDDLE OF NASCAR TRACK
VROOM VROOM VROOM
AAAGH
Wonder why you were ever born.
UTICA
Once you're here, you'll never want to leave.
You'll just stay and stay and stay!
Decide enough is enough, abandon car where it is, and walk away.
Get abducted by cultists.
COME WITH US.
COMMUNE WHERE YOU HAVE TO EAT SPELT, HAVE SEX WITH THE SKEEVY LEADER, AND MAKE JEWELRY OUT OF ABANDONED TIRES
I'M WITH STUPID
Owner of station gets extremely angry.
Accidentally laugh.
Apologize profusely.
MEET YOUR MAKER
So! What brings you here?
Nozzle thing somehow comes off.
???
Drive away in a FRENZY
ALABAMA
SQUIRREL HUT
IT'S GOOD EATIN'!
R. Chast

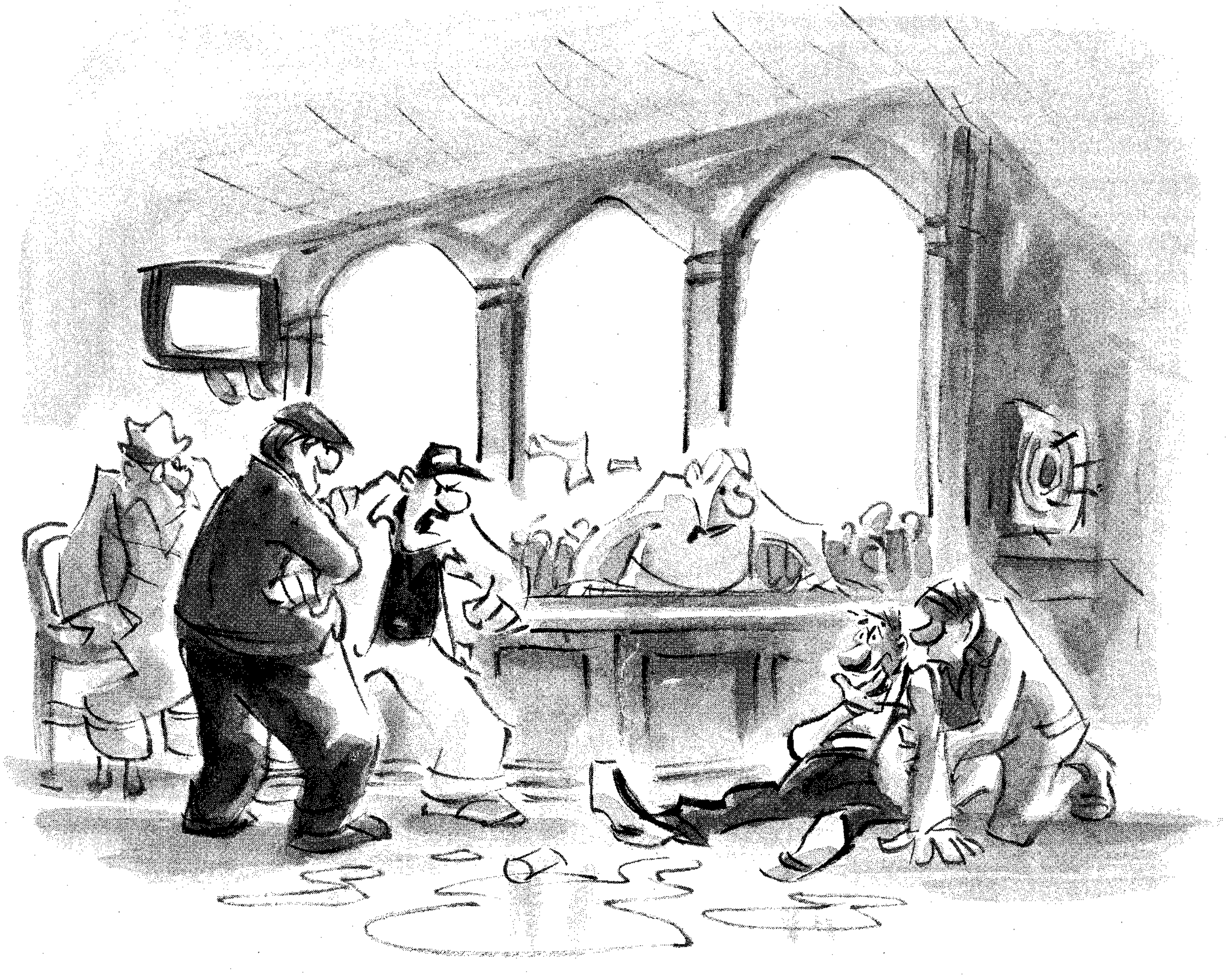
PORTFOLIO BY LEE LORENZ



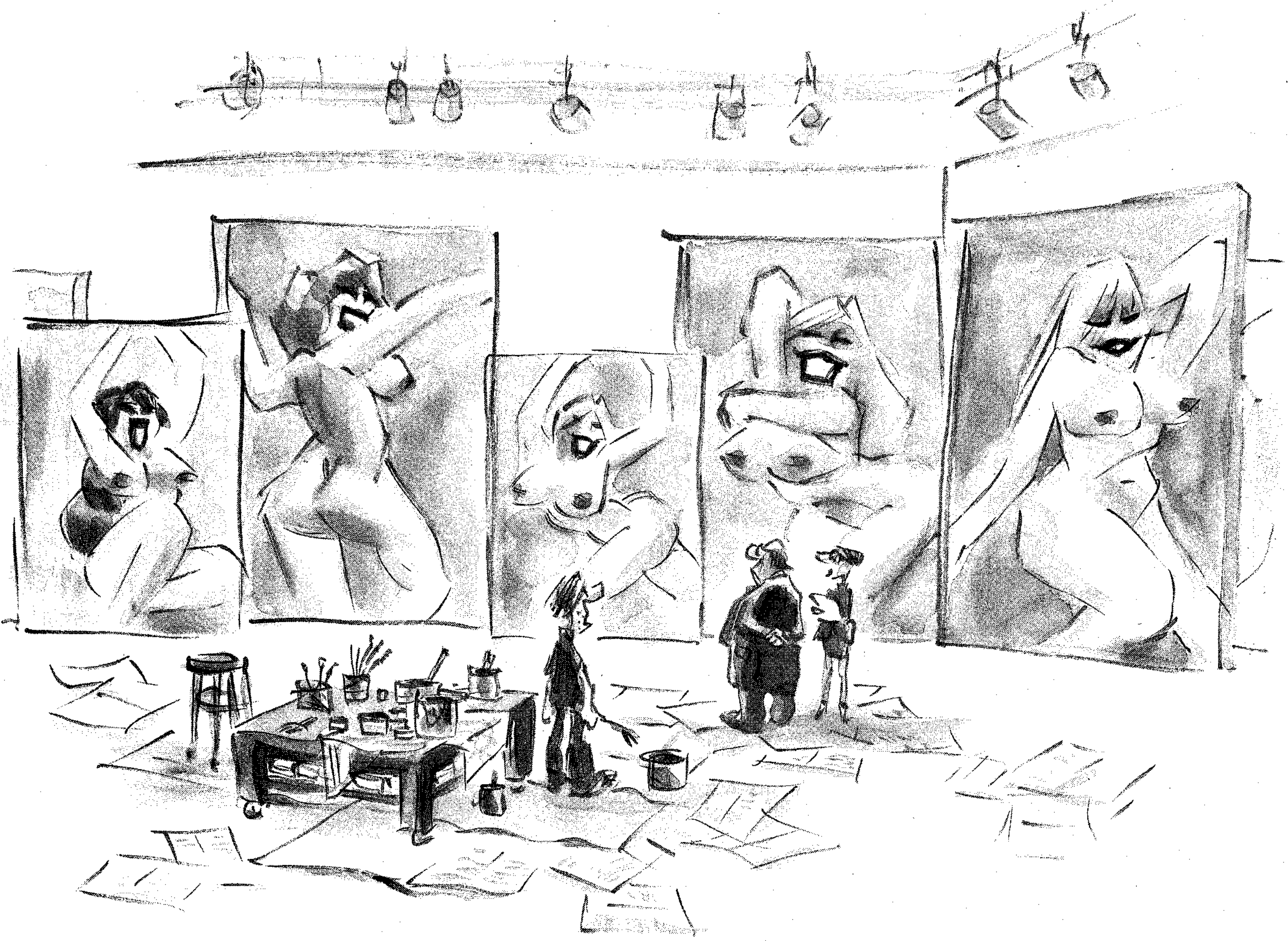
"Look, I know this stuff. But all these questions are having a chilling effect."



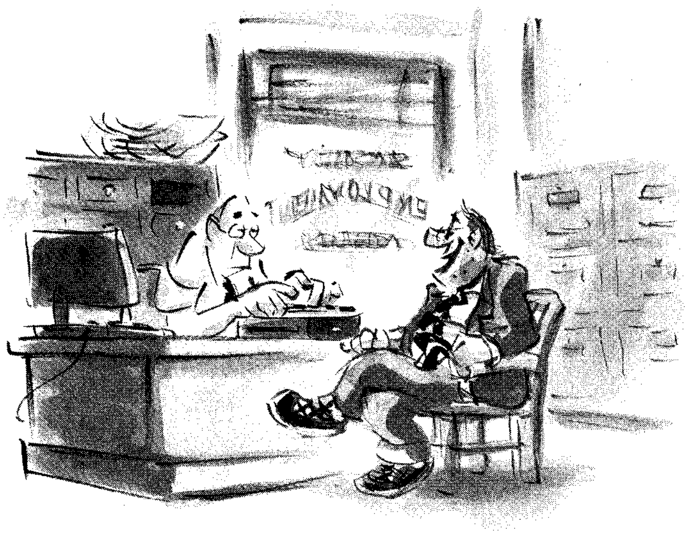
"I had confirmation from three independent sources."



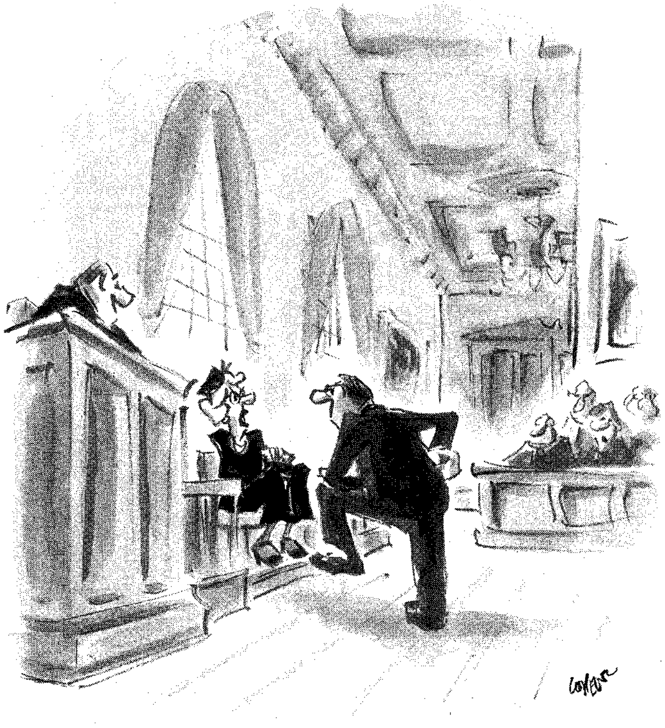
"He didn't actually threaten me, but I perceived him as a threat."



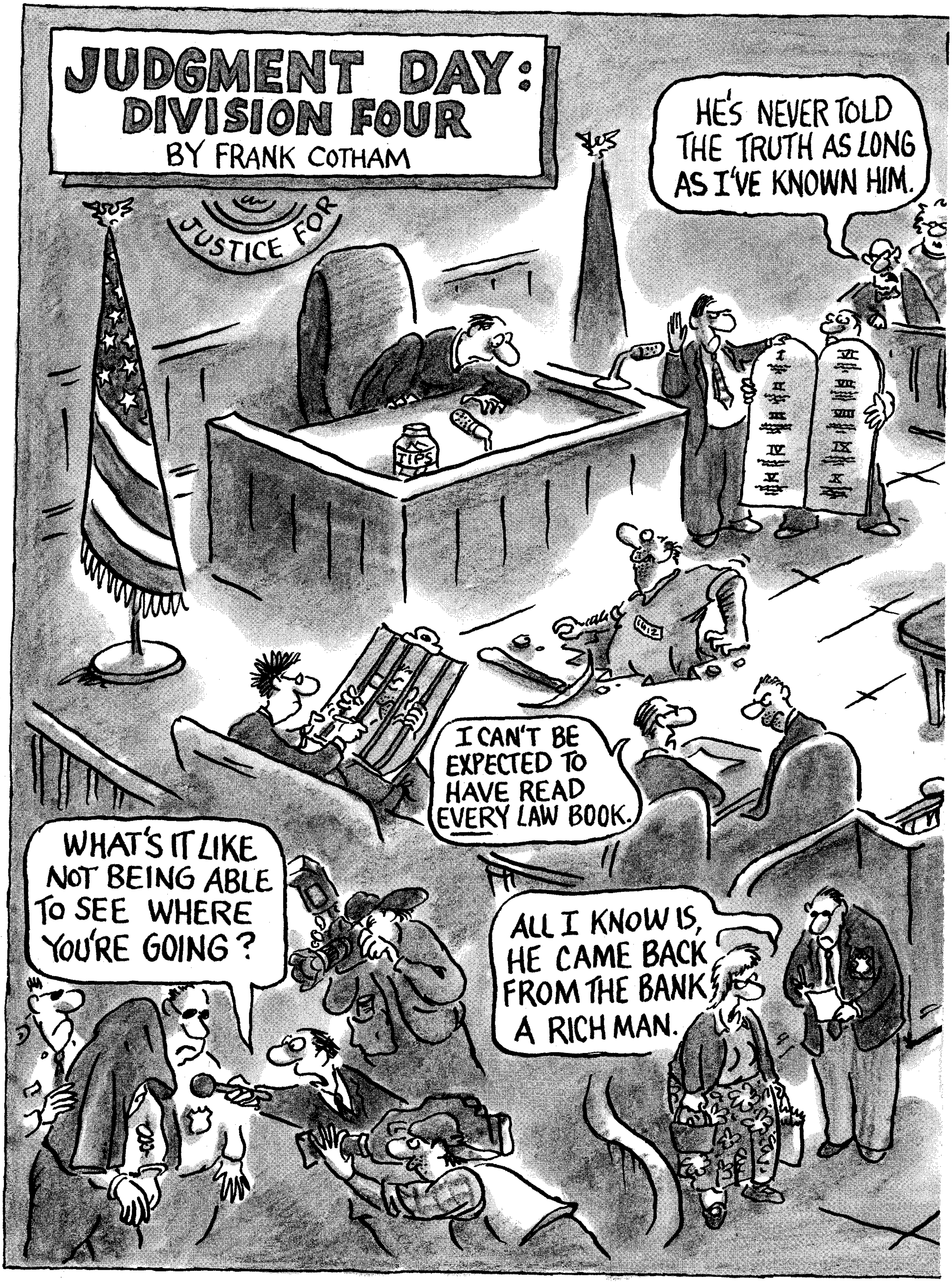
"De Kooning couldn't draw hands, either."



"Hey, there must be some white-shoe law firm that wants to inoculate itself against charges of élitism."



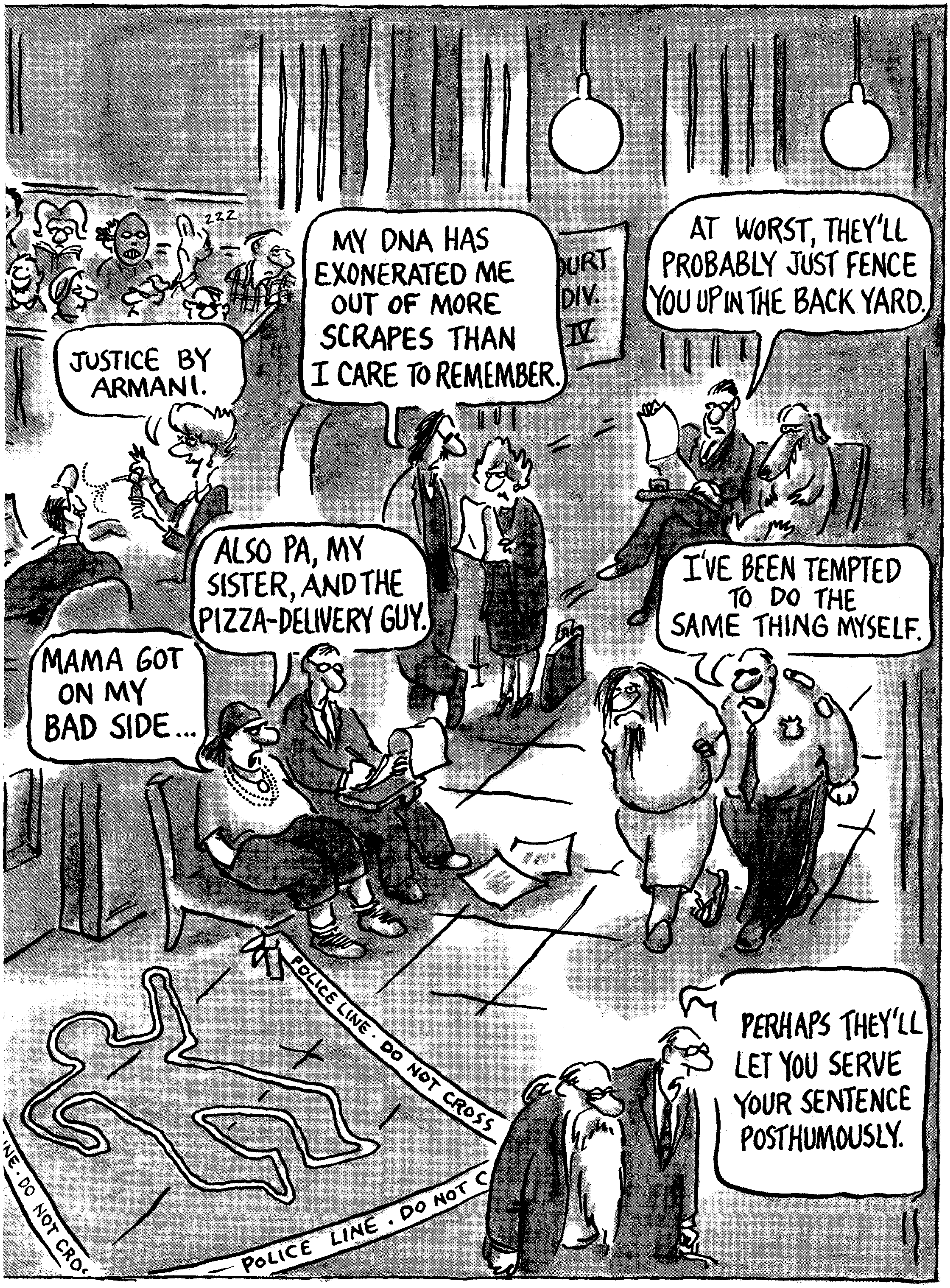
"It was assisted suicide, but he was too pigheaded to ask for it."



JUDGMENT DAY: DIVISION FOUR

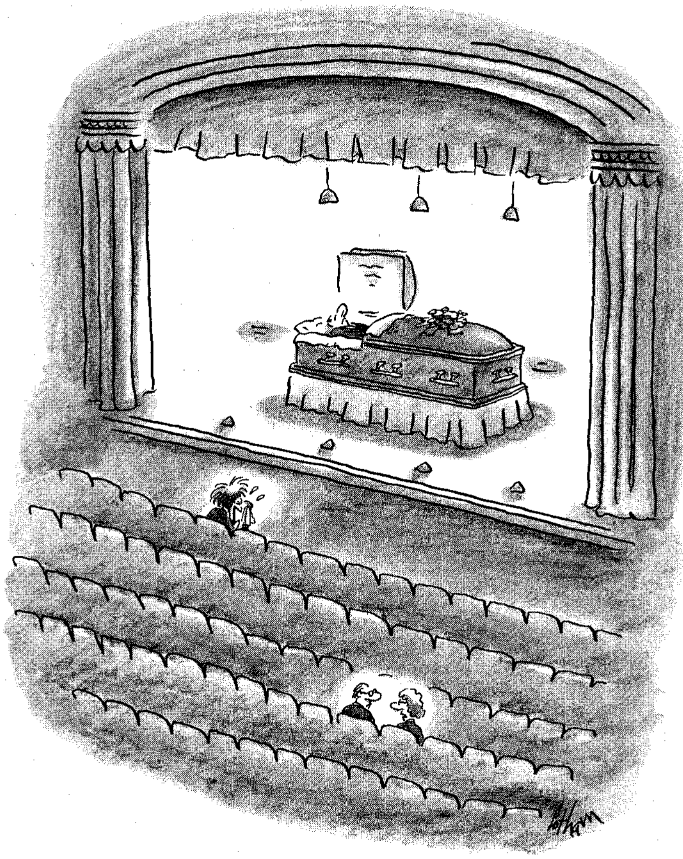
BY FRANK COTHAM

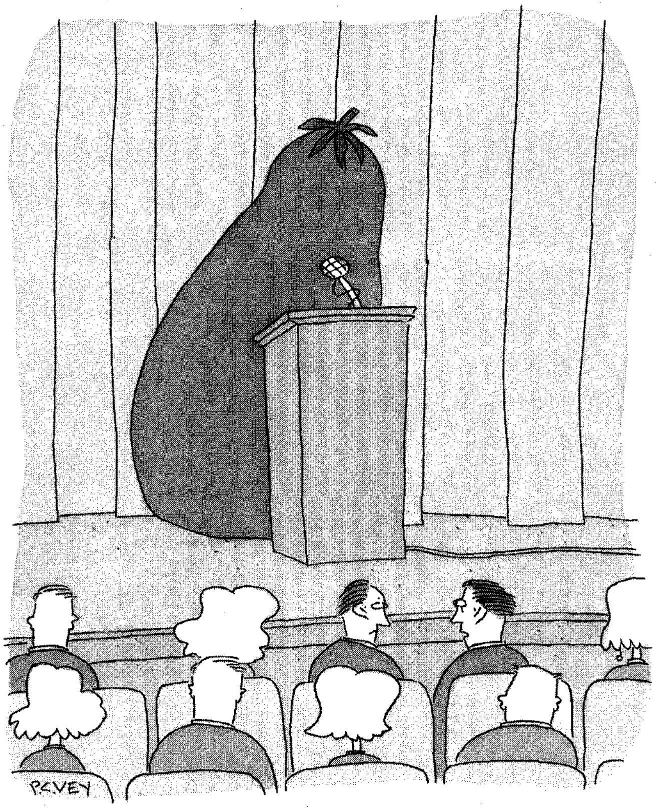
JUSTICE FOR
HE'S NEVER TOLD THE TRUTH AS LONG AS I'VE KNOWN HIM.
TIPS
QUIZ
I CAN'T BE EXPECTED TO HAVE READ EVERY LAW BOOK.
WHAT'S IT LIKE NOT BEING ABLE TO SEE WHERE YOU'RE GOING?
ALL I KNOW IS, HE CAME BACK FROM THE BANK A RICH MAN.

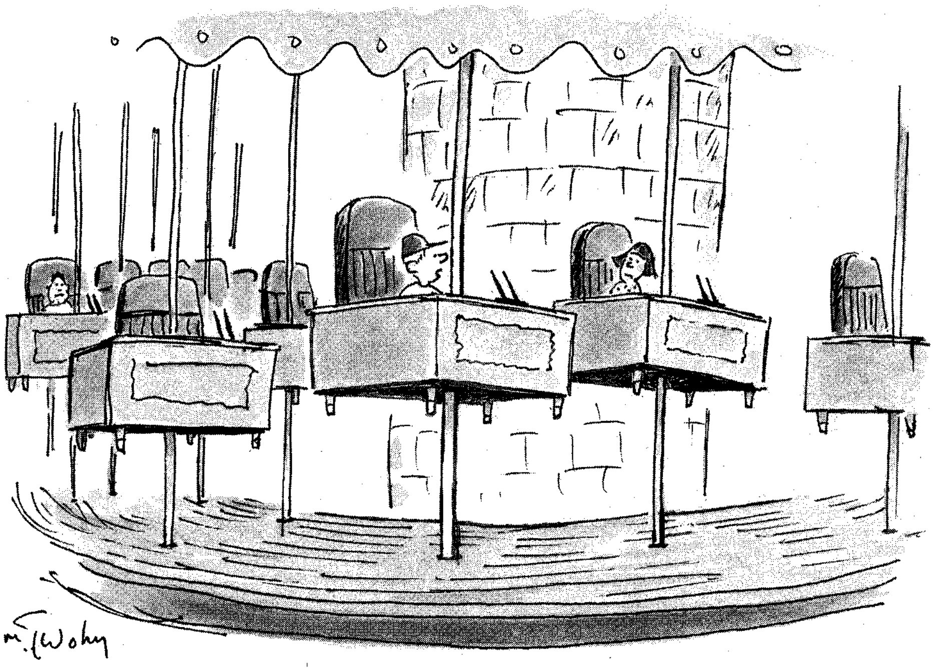

zzz
JUSTICE BY ARMANI.
MY DNA HAS EXONERATED ME OUT OF MORE SCRAPES THAN I CARE TO REMEMBER.
...OURT DIV. IV
AT WORST, THEY'LL PROBABLY JUST FENCE YOU UP IN THE BACK YARD.
ALSO PA, MY SISTER, AND THE PIZZA-DELIVERY GUY.
I'VE BEEN TEMPTED TO DO THE SAME THING MYSELF.
MAMA GOT ON MY BAD SIDE...
POLICE LINE · DO NOT CROSS
PERHAPS THEY'LL LET YOU SERVE YOUR SENTENCE POSTHUMOUSLY.
POLICE LINE · DO NOT C
...NE · DO NOT CROS...

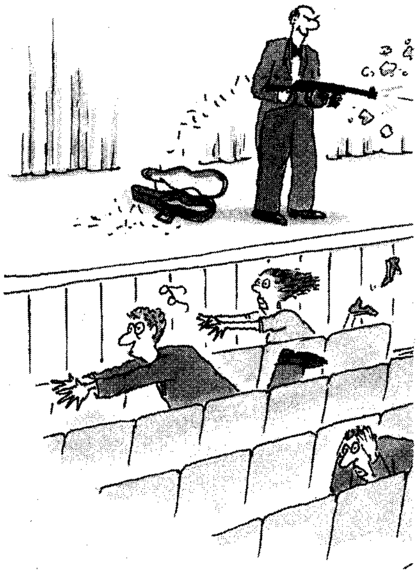
SKETCHBOOK

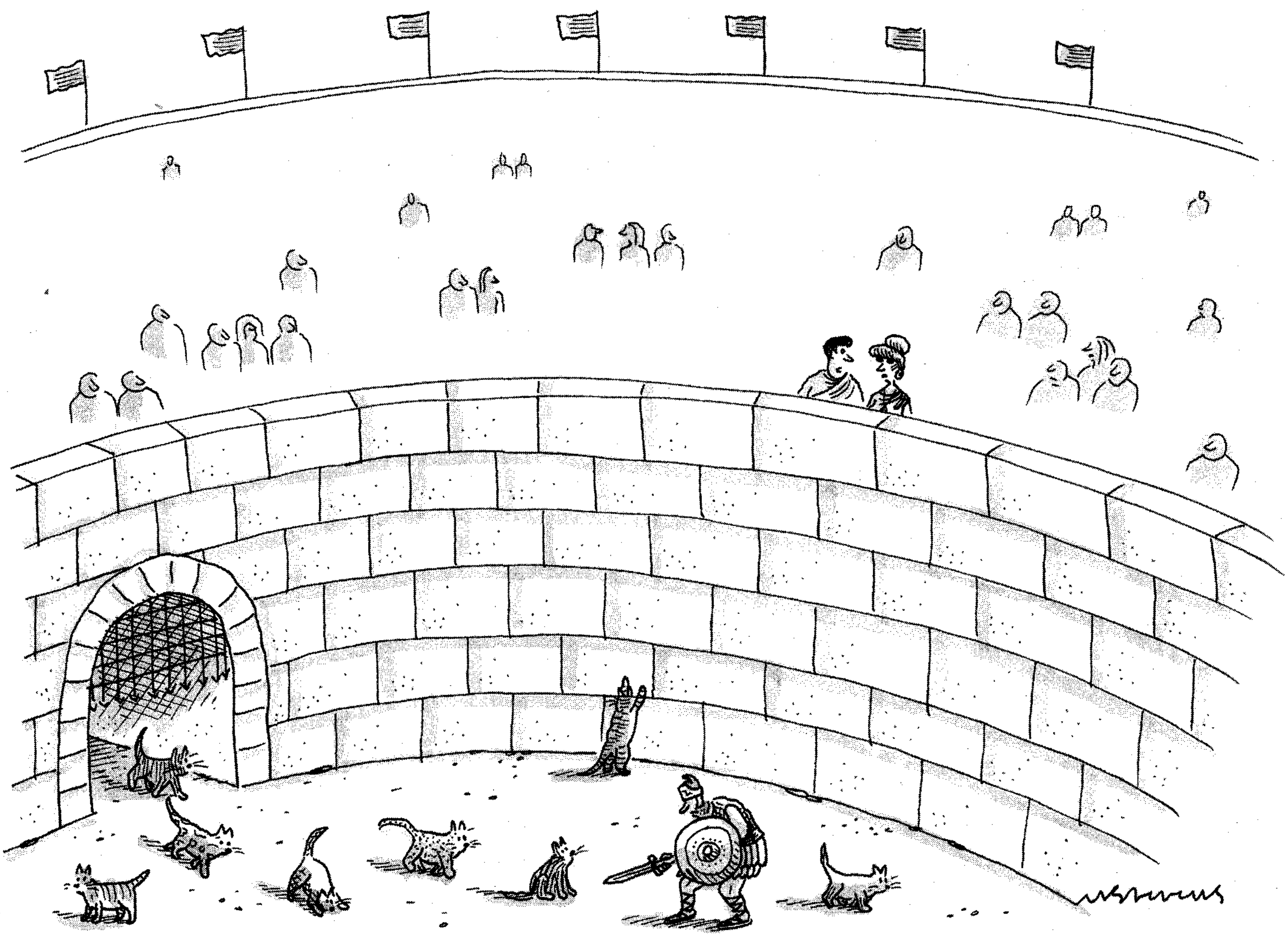
Cartoonists are often asked which comes first, the caption or the drawing. In a variation on our weekly cartoon-caption contest, we asked six of our artists to draw a scene for a single caption: "No wonder we could get tickets."

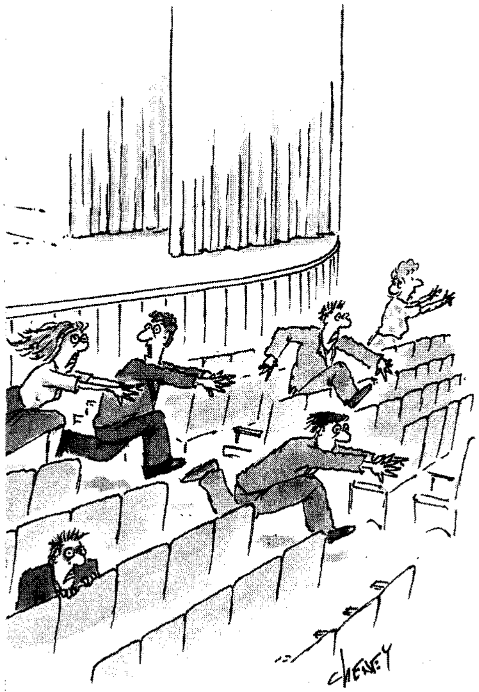


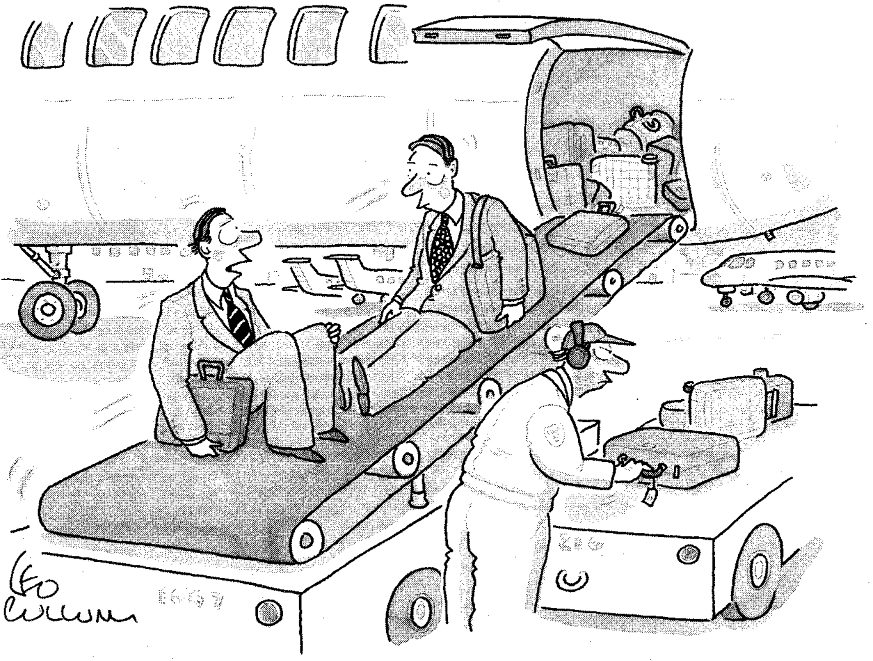


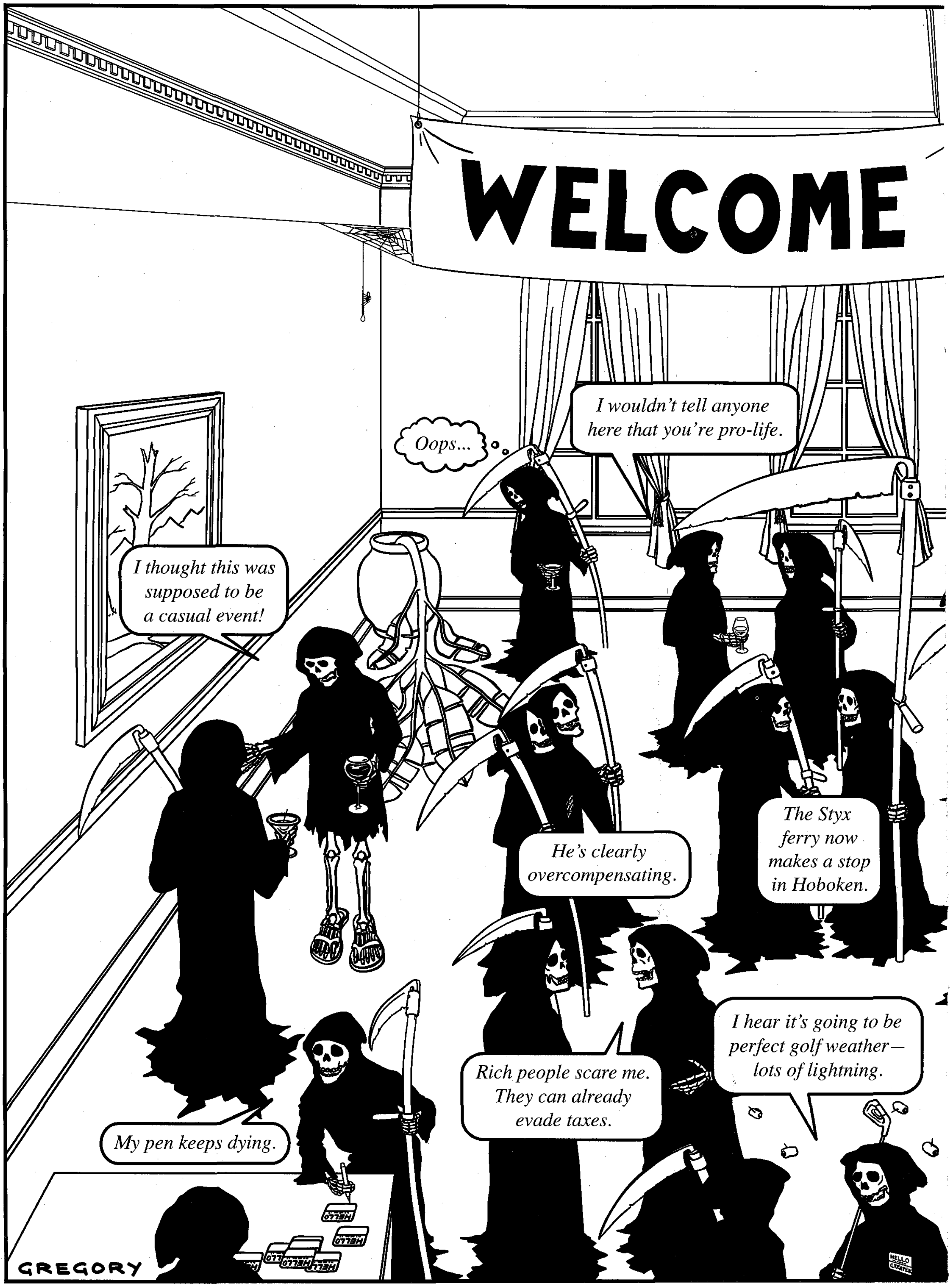


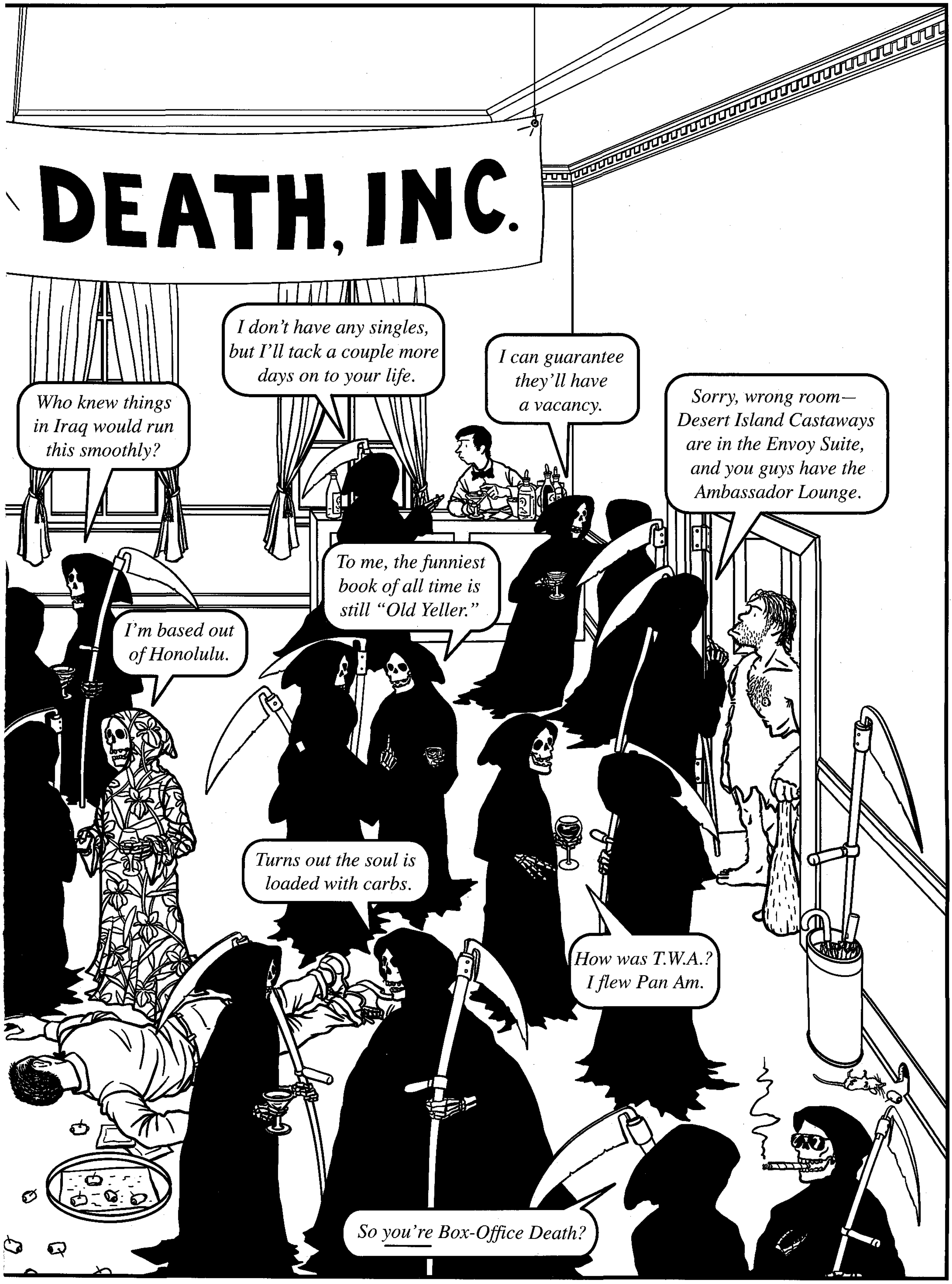


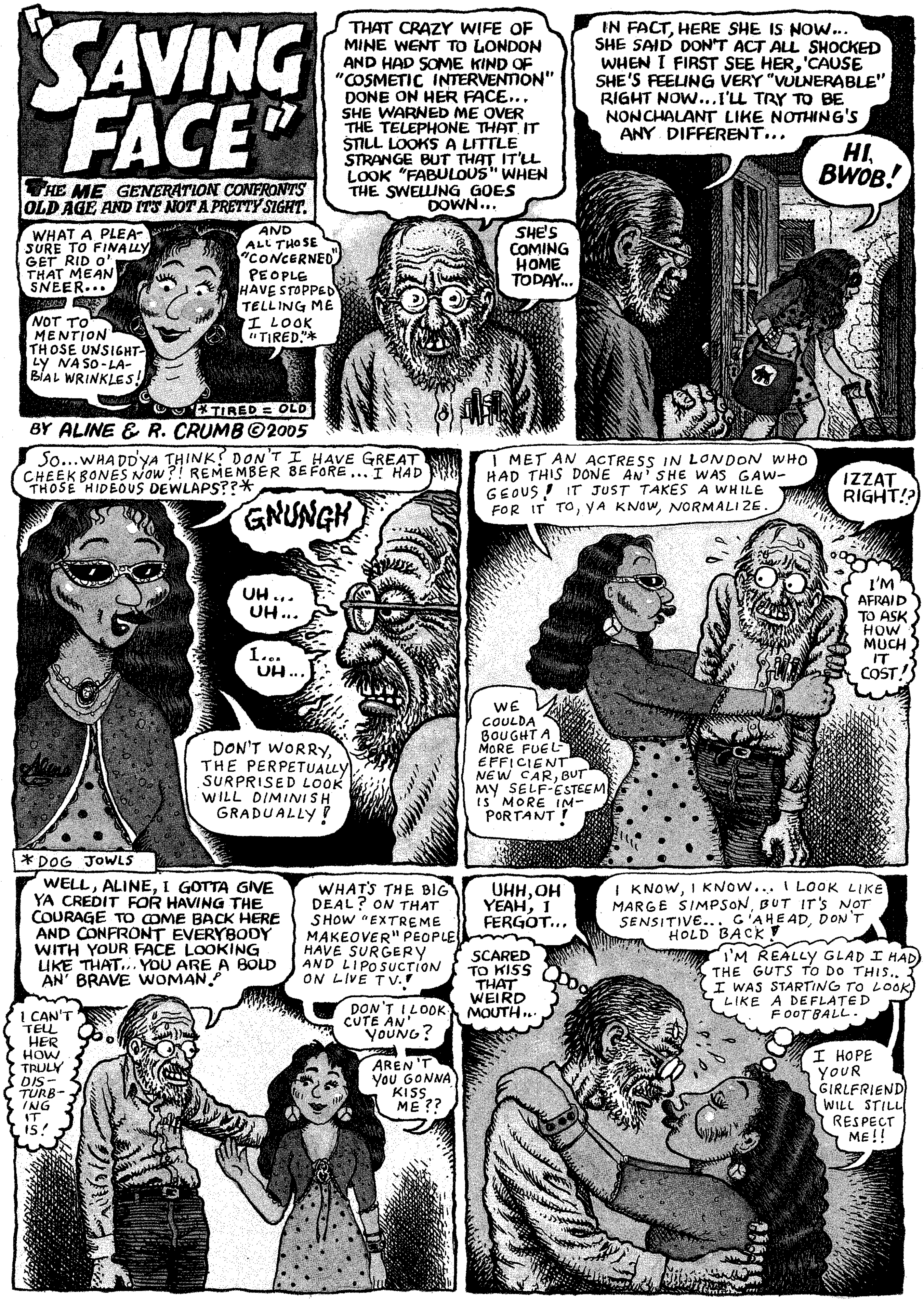

M. Stevens

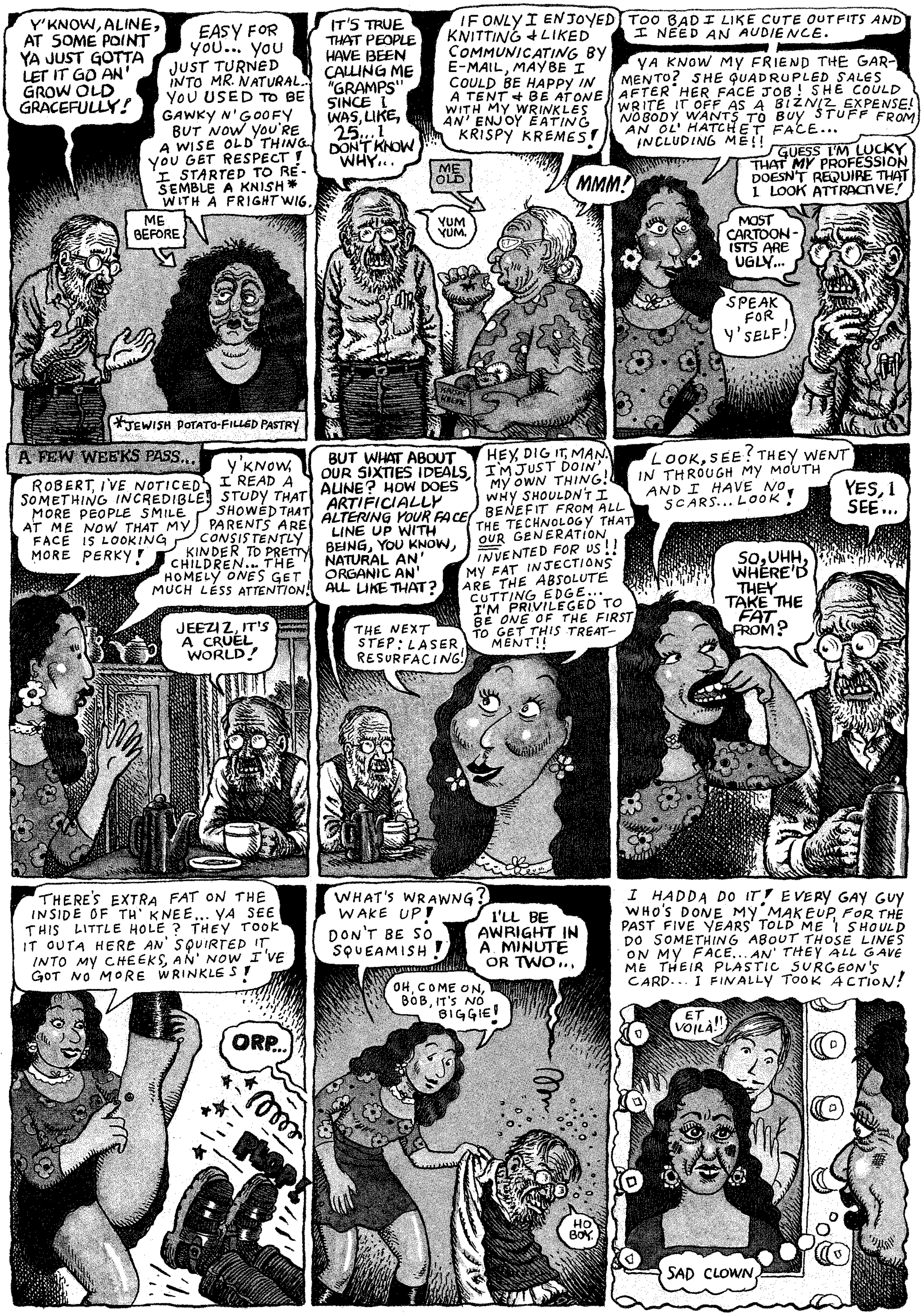

Cheney

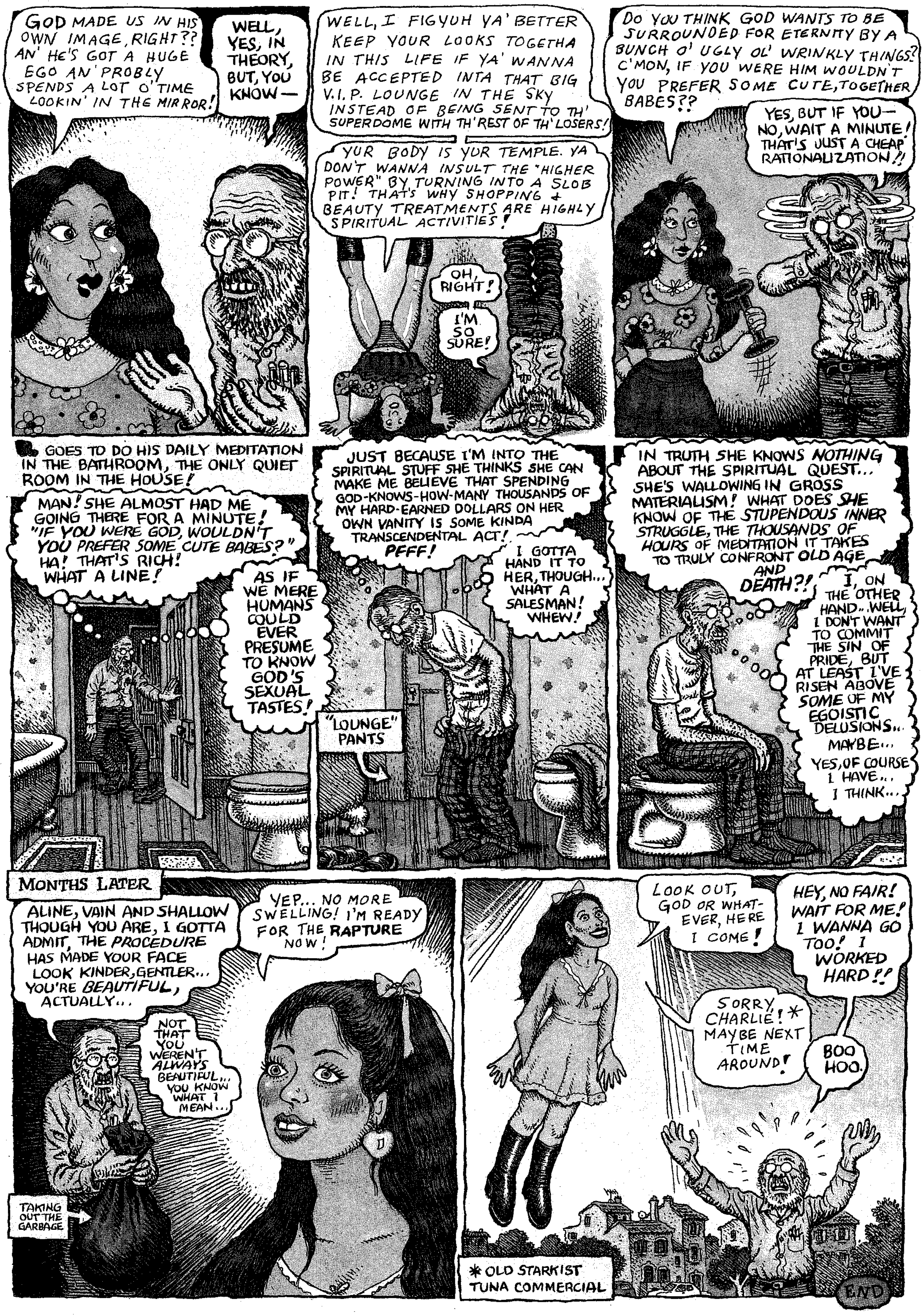

Leo Cullum


WELCOME
Oops...
I wouldn't tell anyone here that you're pro-life.
I thought this was supposed to be a casual event!
He's clearly overcompensating.
The Styx ferry now makes a stop in Hoboken.
Rich people scare me. They can already evade taxes.
I hear it's going to be perfect golf weather—lots of lightning.
My pen keeps dying.
HELLO
HELLO GREAPER
GREGORY


DEATH, INC.
Who knew things in Iraq would run this smoothly?
I don't have any singles, but I'll tack a couple more days on to your life.
I can guarantee they'll have a vacancy.
Sorry, wrong room— Desert Island Castaways are in the Envoy Suite, and you guys have the Ambassador Lounge.
To me, the funniest book of all time is still "Old Yeller."
I'm based out of Honolulu.
Turns out the soul is loaded with carbs.
How was T.W.A.? I flew Pan Am.
So you're Box-Office Death?


"SAVING FACE"
THE ME GENERATION CONFRONTS OLD AGE AND IT'S NOT A PRETTY SIGHT.
BY ALINE & R. CRUMB ©2005
WHAT A PLEASURE TO FINALLY GET RID O' THAT MEAN SNEER...
AND ALL THOSE "CONCERNED" PEOPLE HAVE STOPPED TELLING ME I LOOK "TIRED."*
NOT TO MENTION THOSE UNSIGHTLY NASO-LABIAL WRINKLES!
*TIRED = OLD
THAT CRAZY WIFE OF MINE WENT TO LONDON AND HAD SOME KIND OF "COSMETIC INTERVENTION" DONE ON HER FACE... SHE WARNED ME OVER THE TELEPHONE THAT IT STILL LOOKS A LITTLE STRANGE BUT THAT IT'LL LOOK "FABULOUS" WHEN THE SWELLING GOES DOWN...
SHE'S COMING HOME TODAY...
IN FACT, HERE SHE IS NOW... SHE SAID DON'T ACT ALL SHOCKED WHEN I FIRST SEE HER, 'CAUSE SHE'S FEELING VERY "VULNERABLE" RIGHT NOW... I'LL TRY TO BE NONCHALANT LIKE NOTHING'S ANY DIFFERENT...
HI, BWOB!
SO... WHADD'YA THINK? DON'T I HAVE GREAT CHEEKBONES NOW?! REMEMBER BEFORE... I HAD THOSE HIDEOUS DEWLAPS??*
GNUNGH
UH... UH...
I... UH...
DON'T WORRY, THE PERPETUALLY SURPRISED LOOK WILL DIMINISH GRADUALLY!
*DOG JOWLS
I MET AN ACTRESS IN LONDON WHO HAD THIS DONE AN' SHE WAS GAWGEOUS! IT JUST TAKES A WHILE FOR IT TO, YA KNOW, NORMALIZE.
IZZAT RIGHT!?
I'M AFRAID TO ASK HOW MUCH IT COST!
WE COULDA BOUGHT A MORE FUEL-EFFICIENT NEW CAR, BUT MY SELF-ESTEEM IS MORE IMPORTANT!
WELL, ALINE, I GOTTA GIVE YA CREDIT FOR HAVING THE COURAGE TO COME BACK HERE AND CONFRONT EVERYBODY WITH YOUR FACE LOOKING LIKE THAT... YOU ARE A BOLD AN' BRAVE WOMAN.
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? ON THAT SHOW "EXTREME MAKEOVER" PEOPLE HAVE SURGERY AND LIPOSUCTION ON LIVE T.V.!
I CAN'T TELL HER HOW TRULY DISTURBING IT IS!
DON'T I LOOK CUTE AN' YOUNG?
AREN'T YOU GONNA KISS ME??
UHH, OH YEAH, I FERGOT...
SCARED TO KISS THAT WEIRD MOUTH...
I KNOW, I KNOW... I LOOK LIKE MARGE SIMPSON, BUT IT'S NOT SENSITIVE... G'AHEAD, DON'T HOLD BACK!
I'M REALLY GLAD I HAD THE GUTS TO DO THIS.. I WAS STARTING TO LOOK LIKE A DEFLATED FOOTBALL.
I HOPE YOUR GIRLFRIEND WILL STILL RESPECT ME!!
Aline


Y'KNOW, ALINE, AT SOME POINT YA JUST GOTTA LET IT GO AN' GROW OLD GRACEFULLY!
EASY FOR YOU... YOU JUST TURNED INTO MR. NATURAL.. YOU USED TO BE GAWKY N' GOOFY BUT NOW YOU'RE A WISE OLD THING.. YOU GET RESPECT! I STARTED TO RESEMBLE A KNISH* WITH A FRIGHT WIG.
ME BEFORE
*JEWISH POTATO-FILLED PASTRY
IT'S TRUE THAT PEOPLE HAVE BEEN CALLING ME "GRAMPS" SINCE I WAS, LIKE, 25... I DON'T KNOW WHY...
IF ONLY I ENJOYED KNITTING & LIKED COMMUNICATING BY E-MAIL, MAYBE I COULD BE HAPPY IN A TENT & BE ATONE WITH MY WRINKLES AN' ENJOY EATING KRISPY KREMES!
ME OLD
YUM YUM.
MMM!
TOO BAD I LIKE CUTE OUTFITS AND I NEED AN AUDIENCE.
YA KNOW MY FRIEND THE GARMENTO? SHE QUADRUPLED SALES AFTER HER FACE JOB! SHE COULD WRITE IT OFF AS A BIZNIZ EXPENSE! NOBODY WANTS TO BUY STUFF FROM AN OL' HATCHET FACE... INCLUDING ME!!
GUESS I'M LUCKY THAT MY PROFESSION DOESN'T REQUIRE THAT I LOOK ATTRACTIVE!
MOST CARTOONISTS ARE UGLY...
SPEAK FOR Y'SELF!
A FEW WEEKS PASS...
ROBERT, I'VE NOTICED SOMETHING INCREDIBLE! MORE PEOPLE SMILE AT ME NOW THAT MY FACE IS LOOKING MORE PERKY!
Y'KNOW, I READ A STUDY THAT SHOWED THAT PARENTS ARE CONSISTENTLY KINDER TO PRETTY CHILDREN... THE HOMELY ONES GET MUCH LESS ATTENTION!
JEEZIZ, IT'S A CRUEL WORLD!
BUT WHAT ABOUT OUR SIXTIES IDEALS, ALINE? HOW DOES ARTIFICIALLY ALTERING YOUR FACE LINE UP WITH BEING, YOU KNOW, NATURAL AN' ORGANIC AN' ALL LIKE THAT?
HEY, DIG IT, MAN. I'M JUST DOIN' MY OWN THING! WHY SHOULDN'T I BENEFIT FROM ALL THE TECHNOLOGY THAT OUR GENERATION INVENTED FOR US!! MY FAT INJECTIONS ARE THE ABSOLUTE CUTTING EDGE... I'M PRIVILEGED TO BE ONE OF THE FIRST TO GET THIS TREATMENT!!
THE NEXT STEP: LASER RESURFACING!
LOOK, SEE? THEY WENT IN THROUGH MY MOUTH AND I HAVE NO SCARS... LOOK!
YES, I SEE...
SO, UHH, WHERE'D THEY TAKE THE FAT FROM?
THERE'S EXTRA FAT ON THE INSIDE OF TH' KNEE... YA SEE THIS LITTLE HOLE? THEY TOOK IT OUTA HERE AN' SQUIRTED IT INTO MY CHEEKS, AN' NOW I'VE GOT NO MORE WRINKLES!
ORP...
PLOP!
WHAT'S WRAWNG? WAKE UP! DON'T BE SO SQUEAMISH!
I'LL BE AWRIGHT IN A MINUTE OR TWO...
OH, COME ON, BOB, IT'S NO BIGGIE!
HO BOY.
I HADDA DO IT! EVERY GAY GUY WHO'S DONE MY MAKEUP FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS TOLD ME I SHOULD DO SOMETHING ABOUT THOSE LINES ON MY FACE... AN' THEY ALL GAVE ME THEIR PLASTIC SURGEON'S CARD... I FINALLY TOOK ACTION!
ET VOILÀ!!
SAD CLOWN


GOD MADE US IN HIS OWN IMAGE, RIGHT?? AN' HE'S GOT A HUGE EGO AN' PROBLY SPENDS A LOT O' TIME LOOKIN' IN THE MIRROR!
WELL, YES, IN THEORY, BUT, YOU KNOW—
WELL, I FIGYUH YA' BETTER KEEP YOUR LOOKS TOGETHA IN THIS LIFE IF YA' WANNA BE ACCEPTED INTA THAT BIG V.I.P. LOUNGE IN THE SKY INSTEAD OF BEING SENT TO TH' SUPERDOME WITH TH' REST OF TH' LOSERS!
YUR BODY IS YUR TEMPLE. YA DON'T WANNA INSULT THE "HIGHER POWER" BY TURNING INTO A SLOB PIT! THAT'S WHY SHOPPING & BEAUTY TREATMENTS ARE HIGHLY SPIRITUAL ACTIVITIES!
OH, RIGHT!
I'M SO SURE!
DO YOU THINK GOD WANTS TO BE SURROUNDED FOR ETERNITY BY A BUNCH O' UGLY OL' WRINKLY THINGS? C'MON, IF YOU WERE HIM WOULDN'T YOU PREFER SOME CUTE, TOGETHER BABES??
YES, BUT IF YOU— NO, WAIT A MINUTE! THAT'S JUST A CHEAP RATIONALIZATION!!
R. GOES TO DO HIS DAILY MEDITATION IN THE BATHROOM, THE ONLY QUIET ROOM IN THE HOUSE!
MAN! SHE ALMOST HAD ME GOING THERE FOR A MINUTE! "IF YOU WERE GOD, WOULDN'T YOU PREFER SOME CUTE BABES?" HA! THAT'S RICH! WHAT A LINE!
AS IF WE MERE HUMANS COULD EVER PRESUME TO KNOW GOD'S SEXUAL TASTES!
JUST BECAUSE I'M INTO THE SPIRITUAL STUFF SHE THINKS SHE CAN MAKE ME BELIEVE THAT SPENDING GOD-KNOWS-HOW-MANY THOUSANDS OF MY HARD-EARNED DOLLARS ON HER OWN VANITY IS SOME KINDA TRANSCENDENTAL ACT! PFEFF!
I GOTTA HAND IT TO HER, THOUGH... WHAT A SALESMAN! WHEW!
"LOUNGE" PANTS
IN TRUTH SHE KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL QUEST... SHE'S WALLOWING IN GROSS MATERIALISM! WHAT DOES SHE KNOW OF THE STUPENDOUS INNER STRUGGLE, THE THOUSANDS OF HOURS OF MEDITATION IT TAKES TO TRULY CONFRONT OLD AGE AND DEATH?!
I, ON THE OTHER HAND.. WELL, I DON'T WANT TO COMMIT THE SIN OF PRIDE, BUT AT LEAST I'VE RISEN ABOVE SOME OF MY EGOISTIC DELUSIONS.. MAYBE... YES, OF COURSE I HAVE... I THINK...
MONTHS LATER
ALINE, VAIN AND SHALLOW THOUGH YOU ARE, I GOTTA ADMIT, THE PROCEDURE HAS MADE YOUR FACE LOOK KINDER, GENTLER... YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL, ACTUALLY...
NOT THAT YOU WEREN'T ALWAYS BEAUTIFUL... YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN...
YEP... NO MORE SWELLING! I'M READY FOR THE RAPTURE NOW!
TAKING OUT THE GARBAGE
LOOK OUT, GOD OR WHAT-EVER, HERE I COME!
HEY, NO FAIR! WAIT FOR ME! I WANNA GO TOO! I WORKED HARD!!
SORRY, CHARLIE!* MAYBE NEXT TIME AROUND!
BOO HOO.
* OLD STARKIST TUNA COMMERCIAL
END

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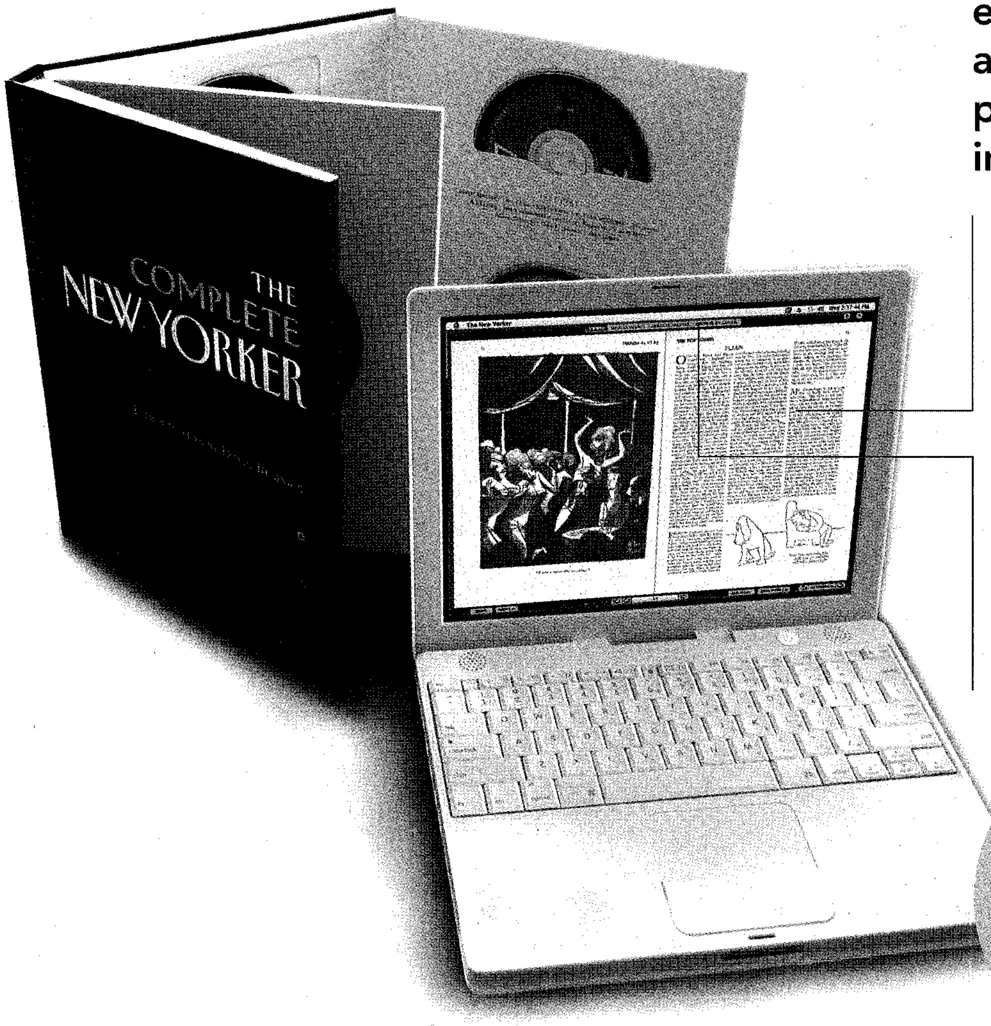

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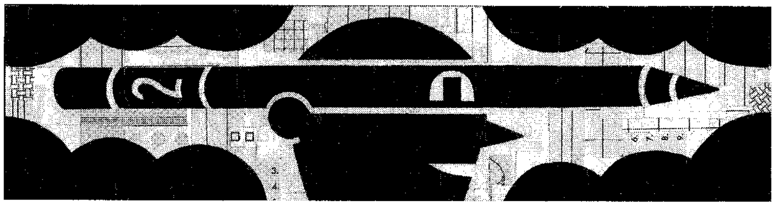

BOOKS

FROM THE ASHES

A new history of Europe since 1945.

BY LOUIS MENAND

"When you are as worried as Europe is about the bare essentials of existence, you are not much interested in ideas," Hamilton Fish Armstrong, the editor of *Foreign Affairs*, wrote in 1947 after a visit there. "You cannot eat either 'Das Kapital' or the Declaration of the Rights of Man." More than thirty-six million Europeans were killed in the Second World War; nineteen million of them were civilians. Almost every town in Europe was damaged, thousands of villages were obliterated, and many major cities—including Rotterdam, Le Havre, Hamburg, Dresden, Minsk, Kiev, and Warsaw, along with large parts of London and Berlin—were destroyed. The Germans looted the countries they conquered and sabotaged what was left when they retreated. The Red Army was no more considerate to the territories it liberated. Much of Europe's military, political, and cultural élite had fled, collaborated, or been killed. In every occupied country except Denmark, local officials had lent a hand in, and Gentiles had shut their eyes to, the deportation, and eventual extermination, of millions of Jews. At the end of the fighting, Britain and France were broke, Germany was under military occupation, and half the Continent—"from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic," in Winston Churchill's famous phrase—was effectively controlled by Joseph Stalin. The annihilation did not come from without; Europe was not murdered by intruders. It committed suicide. Sixty years later, there is something called Europe, but it is not a restored civilization. It is an essentially new civilization. How a part of the world that, fifty years ago, looked like a physical, moral, and intellectual wasteland was able to reinvent itself as a quasi-union of relatively robust and mostly enlightened states is the subject of Tony Judt's "Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945" (Penguin; $39.95). It's a remarkable story, and, fortunately, "Postwar" is a remarkable book.

"I have no big theory of contemporary European history to propose in these pages," Judt says. Judt is a historian who believes in agency: he thinks that things turn out one way instead of another because people make decisions and then act on them, not because life follows a script. Western Europe rebuilt its economy because U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall proposed a plan of unprecedented financial assistance, and the plan was intelligently implemented. Eastern Europe freed itself from Communism almost without bloodshed because Mikhail Gorbachev refrained from intervening in revolutions that he might easily have suppressed. Yugoslavia broke apart because Slobodan Milosevic turned its peoples against one another in the name of a Greater Serbia. These things were not the inevitable consequences of great-power balancing acts or global economic forces or simmering ethnic atavisms. These were things that, in order to happen, took doing.

Still, "Postwar" can fairly be called an interpretation of European history since 1945, and its thesis can be put in a sentence. It is that Europe was able to rebuild itself politically and economically only by forgetting the past, but it was able to define itself morally and culturally only by remembering it. The forgetting was necessary not just because the behavior of most Europeans under Fascism and Nazi occupation was less admirable than anyone wished to acknowledge—but that was, naturally, a big part of it. The bewildering collapse of the great French Army, which folded within six weeks of the German advance in the spring of 1940; the alacrity with which many countries adapted to occupation; and the willingness to ignore, and sometimes to assist in, the deportations all made distasteful memories. Judt notes that France, a country with a population of some forty million, was administered by fifteen hundred Nazis, plus six thousand German policemen. A skeleton team sufficed in the Netherlands as well. Soon after Germany was defeated, a Myth of Resistance sprang up in the formerly occupied countries of Western Europe, and for many years it successfully obscured the truth about wartime life. In Austria (a country that supplied half of all concentration-camp guards), and even in Germany, people managed to convince themselves that they, too, had been Hitler's victims. In a poll conducted in 1951, only five per cent of West Germans said that they felt guilty about what had happened to the Jews; twenty-one per cent thought that the Jews were "partly responsible" for their fate.

The reprisals and trials after the war touched only a fraction of the people who had participated in, and profited from, the brutal establishment and equally brutal maintenance of Hitler's New Europe. Those people included not only the perpetrators of the genocide but the hundreds of thousands of non-Jews who appropriated the businesses, homes, and goods of their exiled or deported neighbors. Judt says that 6,763 people were sentenced to death by French courts immediately after the war (none for "crimes against humanity"); only 791 were actually executed. In Italy, which had been ruled by Fascists

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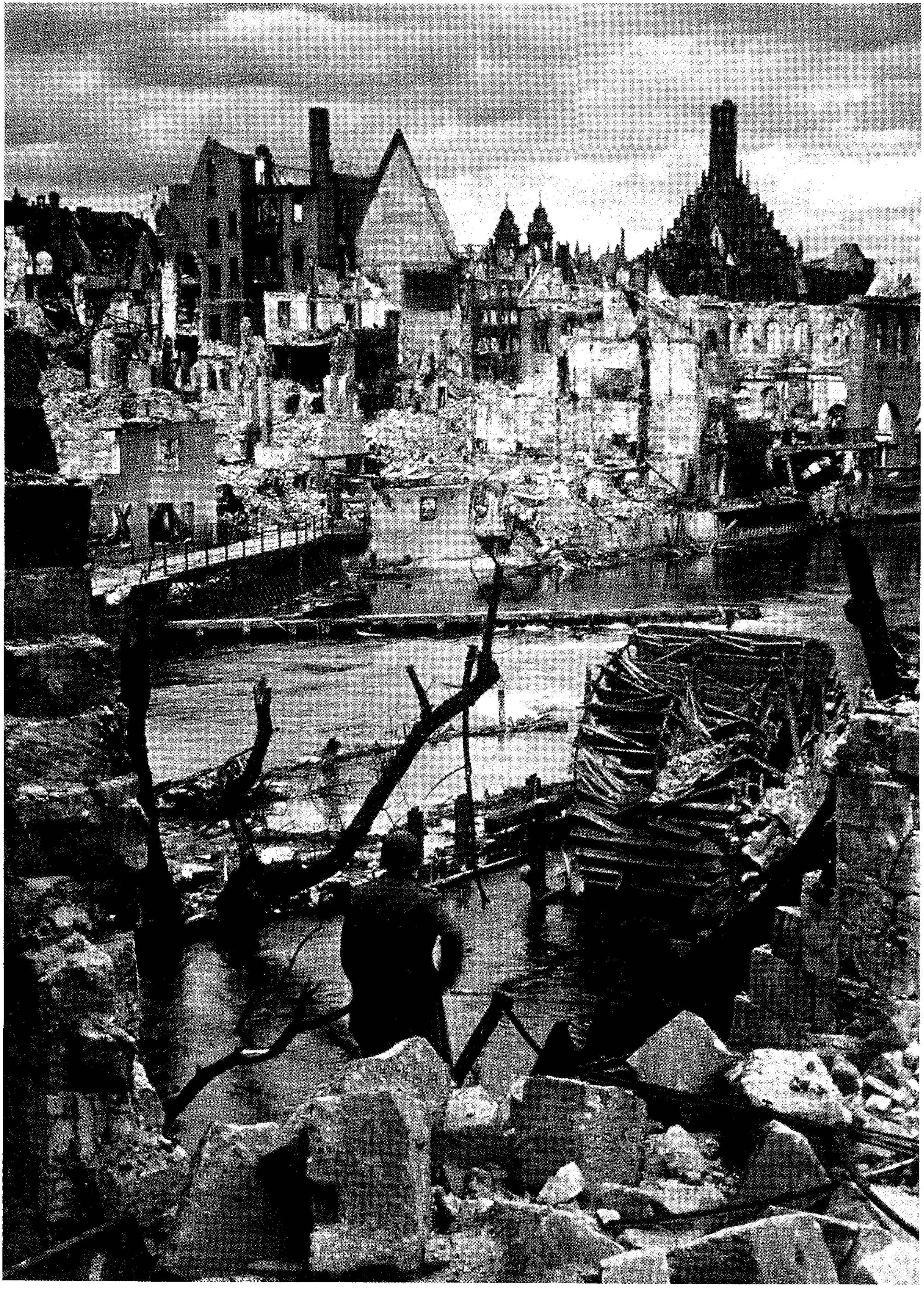
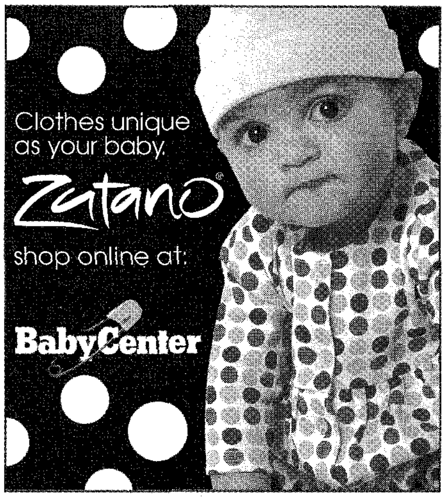


More than thirty-six million Europeans died in the war and many cities were destroyed. Nuremberg, Germany, April, 1945.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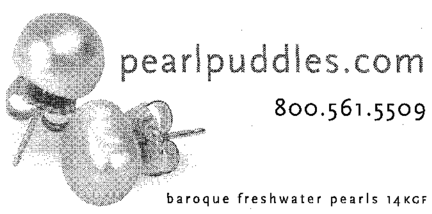
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for twenty-one years, fifty people, at most, were executed.

Even the Allies and the genuine resisters had reasons for ignoring the past, since it would have been impossible to govern the liberated countries without the services of former Fascists and collaborators. This was unavoidably the case in Germany, where the Allies ran a de-Nazification program to retool the leadership, and where General Matthew Ridgway, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, requested pardons for all German officers who had been convicted of war crimes on the Eastern Front. In Eastern Europe, the new Communist bosses were sometimes just the old Fascist bosses in a different uniform. The East German secret police, the Stasi, was, basically, the Gestapo—more or less the same people carrying out more or less the same business in the name of a different political theory. What people had done before 1945 did not come up, because one did not talk about the past. When West Germany protested the entry of "Night and Fog," Alain Resnais's documentary about the Holocaust, in the 1956 Cannes Film Festival, France obligingly withdrew it. As late as 1960, all hundred and thirty-five police chiefs in Italy, and all but two of the country's sixty-four provincial prefects, were former officeholders under Fascism. In 1961, in one of the ugliest atrocities in a war of atrocities, the French police massacred two hundred Algerians in the streets of Paris; the chief of police was Maurice Papon, a man who had been active, during the war, in rounding up French Jews to be transported to Auschwitz. He did not go on trial for that crime until 1997. He received a ten-year sentence (only for the rounding up; he was not held responsible for the eventual deaths), but he was released early, for health reasons.

"It is the universal character of the neglect that is most striking," Judt writes. But he thinks that the motives for forgetting were deeper than personal feelings of guilt or shame or defiance. After the Marshall Plan went into effect, in 1948, the swiftness of Western Europe's economic recovery surprised everyone. (The Soviets rejected the offer of Marshall Plan assistance for themselves and their satellites; Judt calls this "one of Stalin's greatest strategic mistakes.") What made the new prosperity possible, though, was precisely the thoroughness of the devastation that preceded it. Europe in 1945 was the product of what amounted to a thirty-year campaign of ruthlessly efficient ethnic cleansing. "The continent of Europe was once an intricate, interwoven tapestry of overlapping languages, religions, communities, and nations," as Judt puts it. He writes:

> Between 1914 and 1945, however, that Europe was smashed into the dust. The tidier Europe that emerged, blinking, into the second half of the twentieth century had fewer loose ends. Thanks to war, occupation, boundary adjustments, expulsions, and genocide, almost everybody now lived in their own country, among their own people.... The stability of postwar Europe rested upon the accomplishments of Josef Stalin and Adolf Hitler. Between them, and assisted by wartime collaborators, the dictators blasted flat the demographic heath upon which the foundations of a new and less complicated continent were then laid.

Even the Holocaust was ethnically cleansed in official memory: its victims were memorialized as Frenchmen or Belgians or Poles, almost never as Jews. Judt cites a number of examples; one that he doesn't mention is that the word "Jew" is heard only once, in passing, in "Night and Fog." The consumerist Western Europe of the nineteen-fifties and nineteen-sixties, the Europe of cars and refrigerators, generous welfare benefits and centrist politics, was purchased at a terrible moral cost, and no one wanted to think about the bill.

Right after the liberation, there was excited talk about a new start, a Politics of Resistance, a "third way" between America and the Soviet Union—"a dream of revolution that would take off from a *tabula rasa*," in Italo Calvino's words. The moment was almost entirely rhetorical, and it did not last long. Western Europe became a place of social planning, nationalized economies, and strong states not because democratic socialism was in the Continental genes but because there were no reserves of private capital and few viable non-governmental institutions around to put the world back together again. The "European model," Judt says, was mostly an accident. There was no great political vision; necessity and pragmatism ruled the day. As Armstrong wrote, you cannot eat ideology. A lot of what Americans take to be traditionally European is simply an artifact of the postwar scramble for survival—for example, national branding. "The notion that cars made in Germany would ipso facto be better crafted than others, or that Italian-designed clothing, Belgian chocolates, French kitchenware, or Danish furniture were unquestionably the best to be had: this would have seemed curious indeed just a generation before," Judt writes. But it worked: Americans paid a premium for German engineering and Italian styling, imagining that centuries of native craftsmanship lay behind them.

So, whatever the Americans and the Soviets imagined, Europe was not looking abroad for signals about where to go. Nowhere, in the East or the West, did Communist parties ever command a majority of the electorate. Communists came to power in Eastern-bloc countries by chicanery and violence. In France, the Communists did receive twenty-eight per cent of the vote in the 1946 elections, largely on the strength of the Party's reputation as the lion of the Resistance. But the Communist ministers were removed from the governments of France and Italy in 1947, the year Stalin cracked down on deviationism and Moscow took control of national Communist parties everywhere. (Another of Stalin's postwar miscalculations. Judt thinks that Stalin was playing it mainly by ear: if the West gave him an opening, he took it, but he was motivated by no grand design except paranoia.) In Britain, the Communists' best showing was in the 1945 elections, which dumped Churchill and brought Labour to power: Communist candidates received a hundred and two thousand votes—four-tenths of one per cent of the total. In the 1951 elections, which returned Churchill to office, the Communists got just twenty-one thousand of 28.5 million votes cast.

American capitalism was not the model, either. Western Europeans did not feel themselves to be taking Amer-

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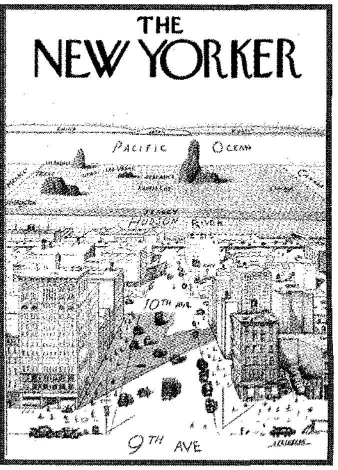

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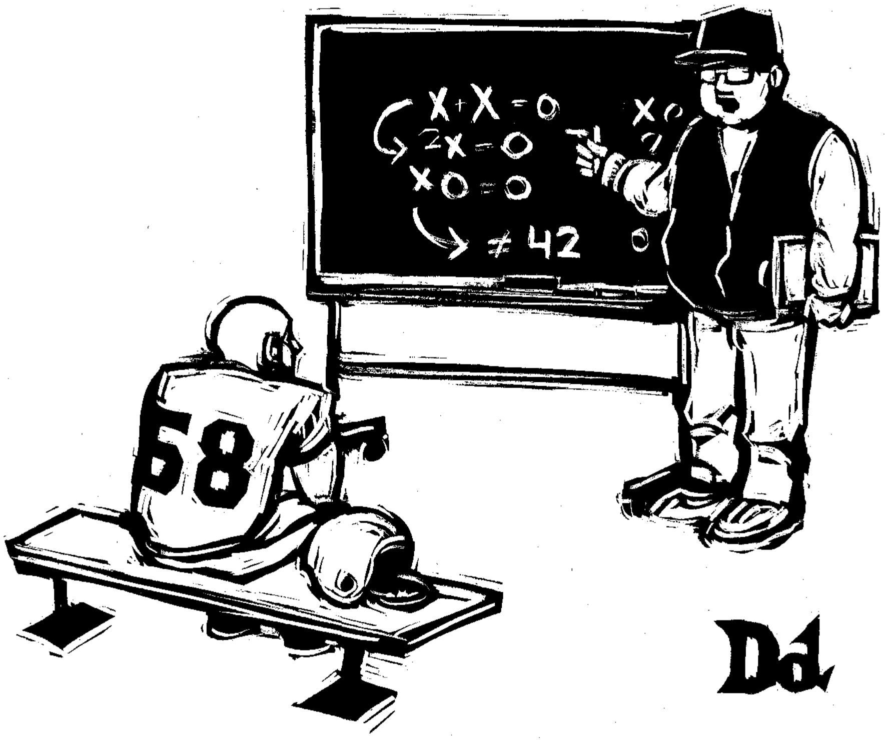

"If you think it's tough at this level, kid, wait until you get into calculus."

• •

ica's side in resisting Communism. The Cold War was nothing new to them; as Judt says, they had been fighting it since 1917. And, he adds, "the subsequent 'Americanization' of Europe in the Fifties and Sixties is often exaggerated." Modernization was a priority—particularly in France, whose economy had been heavily agricultural—and an American military presence was indispensable for keeping the Soviets contained, and also the Germans, whom many still feared. But Europeans did not all believe that the consummation of modernization and consumerism was Americanism. Britain's reluctance to distance itself from the United States was regarded on the Continent then as it is today: a sign that Britain is not truly a European country (a feeling shared by many Britons). Even after 1968, when tiny pockets of dissidence began to form in Eastern Europe, America was not the ideal to which the dissidents aspired; and although the United States gave financial aid to groups like Solidarity, in Poland, it played, Judt says, "a remarkably small" role in the revolutions of 1989. In the standard American account, it was Ronald Reagan's refusal to truckle to the Soviets—his "evil empire" rhetoric—that made the difference; but Judt thinks that Reagan was playing to a domestic audience, and that the Communist house of cards was due to fall no matter who was President of the United States. Postwar Europe, Judt argues, took shape in response to European conditions: "Shadowed by history, its leaders implemented social reforms and built new institutions as a prophylactic, to keep the past at bay."

The official remembering began with the second round of trials: the trials in Ulm, in 1958, involving participants in war crimes on the Eastern Front; the Eichmann trial, in Jerusalem, in 1961; the trials of the Auschwitz guards, in Frankfurt, in 1963. These proceedings were the first chance that survivors had to testify publicly about their experience in the camps. Still, in 1969 the French government prohibited the broadcast of Marcel Ophuls's documentary about the Occupation, "The Sorrow and the Pity," which exploded the French Myth of Resistance. But Judt thinks that the transforming event was the West German broadcast, in 1979, of the American television mini-series "Holocaust," which was watched by more than half the adult population—

twenty million people. The Holocaust was de-cleansed.

Documentaries were one of the forms of the coming to terms, notably Claude Lanzmann's overwhelming nine-and-a-half-hour "Shoah" (1985), which, Judt says, had a "dramatic impact upon French audiences" partly because it was about things done by Germans and Poles, not Frenchmen, and Ophuls's "Hotel Terminus" (1988), about Klaus Barbie and the torture and murder of Jews and *résistants* (sometimes Jewish *résistants*) in Lyons. (Still, both movies have many scenes in which Poles, Germans, and Frenchmen angrily insist that it's wrong to go around bothering people about things that happened so long in the past.) There was also a surge in official recognitions of the Holocaust, including reparations, museums, public memorials, state visits to Israel, and more trials: of Barbie, in 1987; of Paul Touvier, a Barbie functionary, in 1994; of Papon, three years later. (As Judt points out, French acknowledgment of the truth about the Occupation was facilitated by the departure from office, in 1995, of President François Mitterrand. Mitterrand had been a civil servant in the Vichy regime.) Judt thinks that this bout of what he calls "compensatory surplus memory" has finally made it possible for Europe to move on. The dead have received their proper burial.

The excellence of "Postwar" was no doubt hard to achieve—Judt says that he began planning the book in 1989—but it is easy to describe. The writing is vivid; the coverage—of little countries as well as of great ones—is virtually superhuman; and, above all, the book is smart. Every page contains unexpected data, or a fresh observation, or a familiar observation freshly turned. And there are more than eight hundred pages. The book could, actually, have used a few more. "Postwar" has no endnotes or bibliography. The preface explains that these were deemed unnecessary in an already long volume "addressed to a general readership," and that a full apparatus of references will be available "in due course" on the Web site of the Remarque Institute, a center for European studies at New York University, of which Professor Judt is the director. This is not the first time that the "general reader" has been volunteered as an excuse for dispensing with normal scholarly requirements, but surely if anyone needs the references it is the non-specialist. A visit to the Remarque Institute Web site reveals that "in due course" means "not yet." Big books are expensive to manufacture, but this one deserves a long life, and it is less of a resource for being partly subcontracted to another medium. It would be an unfortunate practice for publishers to save on paper by routinely spinning off the back matter. The book does include an index, but it is far from comprehensive. It omits names mentioned in the text (Barbie, Ridgway) and includes idiosyncratic entries that no one would think to search for—"Recycled Communists, 693," for example, or "Sexual fulfillment, 404-405," or "Cynicism, 37, 481-82." There is a distressing number of misspelled names (Ridgeway for Ridgway, for instance) and similar errors. The book would have benefitted from another month in the shop.

A lot of the pleasure of "Postwar" derives from the personality of its author, who does not count self-effacement a literary virtue. Judt was born in London three years after the war ended, and he was educated at Cambridge and in Paris. He teaches in the United States, but he has retained a distinctly British temperament—not the bluff-and-hearty, Dr. Watson type but its superior cousin, the suffer-no-fools, Holmes type. The Britishness comes out in some predictable ways, such as an inability to discuss French statesmen with a completely straight face, and a special acidity reserved for most things British—the shoddy consumer goods, the trendy fashions, the unsafe railroads, and the klutziness of the nation's leaders in dealing with the rest of Europe. Judt's account of the career of Margaret Thatcher, whom he cannot help admiring for the contrast she made with her feckless male predecessors, is particularly flavorful.

"Postwar" is first-rate political, economic, and social history. The only sections that are unworthy of the author's talents are the brief ventures into intellectual history, and the proverbial British prudishness about abstract ideas may

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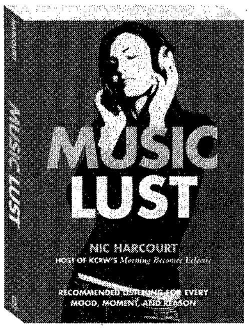
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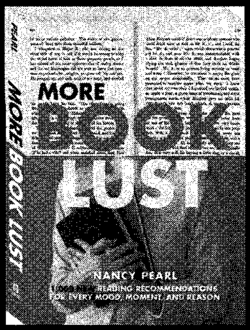

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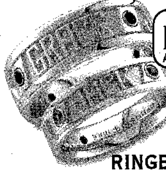

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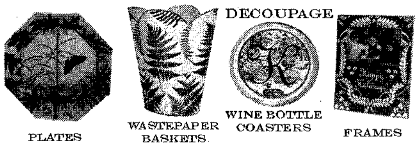

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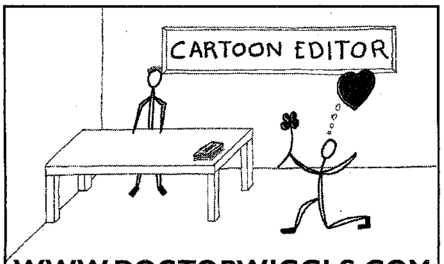

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have something to do with this. As a reference to the philosopher Jacques Derrida as "the literary critic Jacques Derrida" suggests, Judt has no patience for Continental thought, whose prominence, such as it was, he tends to attribute to a combination of fashionableness and ambition. He suggests, for instance, that Michel Foucault was signally aided by the invention of the television: in an earlier age, Judt says, Foucault might have been just "a drawing-room favorite, a star of the Parisian lecture circuit, like Henri Bergson fifty years earlier," a statement that is both silly (American readers of Foucault never saw him on television) and an insult to Bergson, who was an internationally celebrated philosopher.

This kind of thing is not criticism; it's sneering. "Herbert Marcuse, a Weimar-era intellectual who had ended up in Southern California—where he handily adapted his old epistemology to his new environment—offered a helpful conflation of all these strands of thought." What is trying to get said here? Marcuse was a German Jew (and anti-Communist) who, along with the rest of the Institute for Social Research—the Frankfurt School—went into exile after the rise of Hitler. He "ended up" in Southern California because, after a long career as a professor at Brandeis, he took a job at the University of California at San Diego. And his "helpful conflation" (as though being helpful were mere opportunism) concerned a project on which the Frankfurt School intellectuals had been engaged since the nineteen-thirties, the revision of Marxism by the lights of psychoanalytic theory. Not trusty stone-kicking British empiricism, it's true; but in a historian generosity should be part of the equipment. (Leave the pettiness to reviewers.) Judt is so suspicious of intellectualism that at one point he suggests that the British are immune to it. "The species has always been uncommon in Britain," he says of the public intellectual. This is almost comical. What about, in the period covered in Judt's own book, Bertrand Russell, C. P. Snow, and the man who was arguably the most influential public intellectual of the Cold War era, George Orwell?

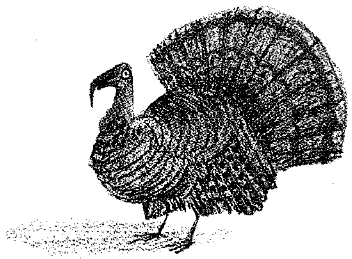
The dimness is entertaining in its way—Colonel Pickering peeking out from behind the Henry Higgins mask. For the most part, the stiff upper lip, with an occasional curl, is the unsentimental attitude we want. Still, in the end, after pointing out many of the flaws and fragilities beneath the surface of the new, united Europe, Judt permits himself an uncharacteristically sanguine moment. "The twenty-first century," he suggests, "might yet belong to Europe." Is this a credible expectation? A lot depends, of course, on what is meant by "belong." From the provincial American point of view, the most striking change in the status of Europe is that it is no longer the place where Americans with intellectual, artistic, or just "life style" aspirations wish—or even pretend to wish—to be. Once, Europe was where all the new stuff seemed to be coming from. Then, some time in the nineteen-sixties, that stopped. Europe's great cities are still fascinating to Americans, but the fascination is fundamentally touristic. They're theme parks. Almost no one thinks that you can't be a real writer or painter or sophisticated bon vivant unless you spend some time living in one of them. This is not a judgment on the splendors of American civilization; it's just an observation about European civilization, and it bears on what sort of role in the world Europe will play during the rest of the century.

The much more serious challenges to Europe's chances of standing as a model society of nations come from different points on the compass. As Judt notes, there are fifteen million Muslims in the European Union; eighty million more are on the doorstep in Bulgaria and Turkey, waiting to get in. An ancient fear of the Asian and African other was always an ingredient of a certain European self-conception; it lies behind European anti-Semitism, for example, which figured Jews as Orientals. It is not obvious how "Europe" can be a concept that includes Turkey, but it is not obvious, either, what the grounds are for keeping Turkey out, once the economic requirements for admittance to the E.U. have been met. The encounter between these new populations and the officially secular and integrative nations of the new Europe will be a test of Judt's hope that the ashes of the old Europe are truly cold. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

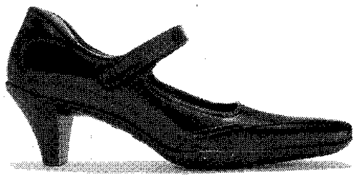
The Quitter, *by Harvey Pekar, illustrated by Dean Haspiel (Vertigo; $19.99).* Pekar's downbeat chronicle of his life, "American Splendor," has achieved classic status, but this memoir of his early years is less consistently effective. Pekar is a master of moments captured in a few frames, and his talent seems less suited to a longer narrative. Still, he retains his ability to make the reader sympathize and wince, as when his Communist mother doesn't understand his need for emotional support after some black kids beat him up. He writes about becoming resigned to boring jobs, wiping out of the Navy, worrying about money. "I still wonder today how I'm going to get by the next several years," he says, and the book is really an acknowledgment that sometimes all a person can do, his whole life, is get by.

Masters of American Comics, *edited by John Carlin, Paul Karasik, and Brian Walker (Yale; $45).* In 1906, a group of newspaper executives attended a talk entitled "Is the Comic Supplement a Desirable Feature?," which charged that "crude coloring, slapdash drawing, and very cheap and obvious funniness" would numb people to "the finer forms of art." By contrast, the cultural prestige that comics currently enjoy is exemplified by this book, which features appreciations of a familiar canon—from George Herriman to Chris Ware—by a starry list of contributors, such as Dave Eggers and Jules Feiffer. Not all the contributions are equally valuable. Raymond Pettibon's appreciation of Will Eisner turns into a free-associative rant about the editorial pages of the *Times*. But an essay on Lyonel Feininger, who eventually abandoned comics for a high-art career, and taught at the Bauhaus for several years, is illuminating. Hundreds of color reproductions allow the ingenuity of the artists' work to speak for itself.



Tunes for 'Toons, *by Daniel Goldmark (California; $24.95).* Examining cartoons from a musicological perspective, Goldmark does frame-by-frame readings of such works as "What's Opera, Doc?" Occasionally, this approach seems overserious, but it helps explain the artful mechanics behind a classic sequence like that of Elmer Fudd chasing after Bugs while wearing a Viking helmet and singing "Kill the wabbit" to Wagner's "Walküre" leitmotif. Goldmark compares such spirited culture-tweaking favorably with the ponderous high-culture aspirations of Disney's "Fantasia." Elsewhere, discussing cartoons' use of jazz and their frequently racist depictions of black musicians, he draws the provocative conclusion that "cartoons are, in many ways, a natural extension of the minstrel show." He also compares cartoons to ballet, and he quotes a manifesto in which Scott Bradley (the composer of much music for "Tom and Jerry") imagines the "Cartoon Music of the Future": "Think of 'Pelléas and Mélisande,'" Bradley wrote optimistically, "and *mise en scène* by Dalí."

The World on Sunday, *by Nicholson Baker and Margaret Brentano (Bulfinch; $50).* In 1898, as part of a larger strategy to transform his New York *World* newspaper, Joseph Pulitzer bought a high-speed color printing press—seventy tons, with forty thousand moving parts. Appearing in the paper's Sunday edition, color pictures leavened the news with wonder: a pioneering night photographer captured the glorious electrification of St. Louis during the World's Fair; an illustrator charged with covering the Great Airship Race of 1904 before anyone had seen the ships resourcefully drew the imagined perspective of an airborne competitor. As Baker notes in his introduction, Pulitzer was near-blind when color illustrations were introduced: "The more his own sight dimmed, the more imploringly colorful his paper became."



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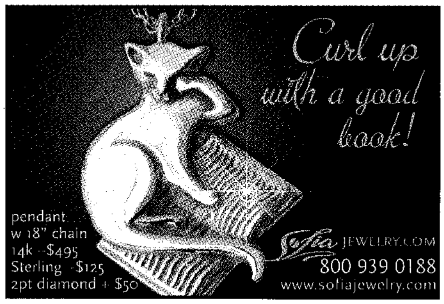

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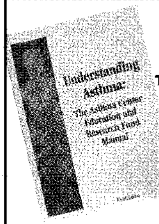

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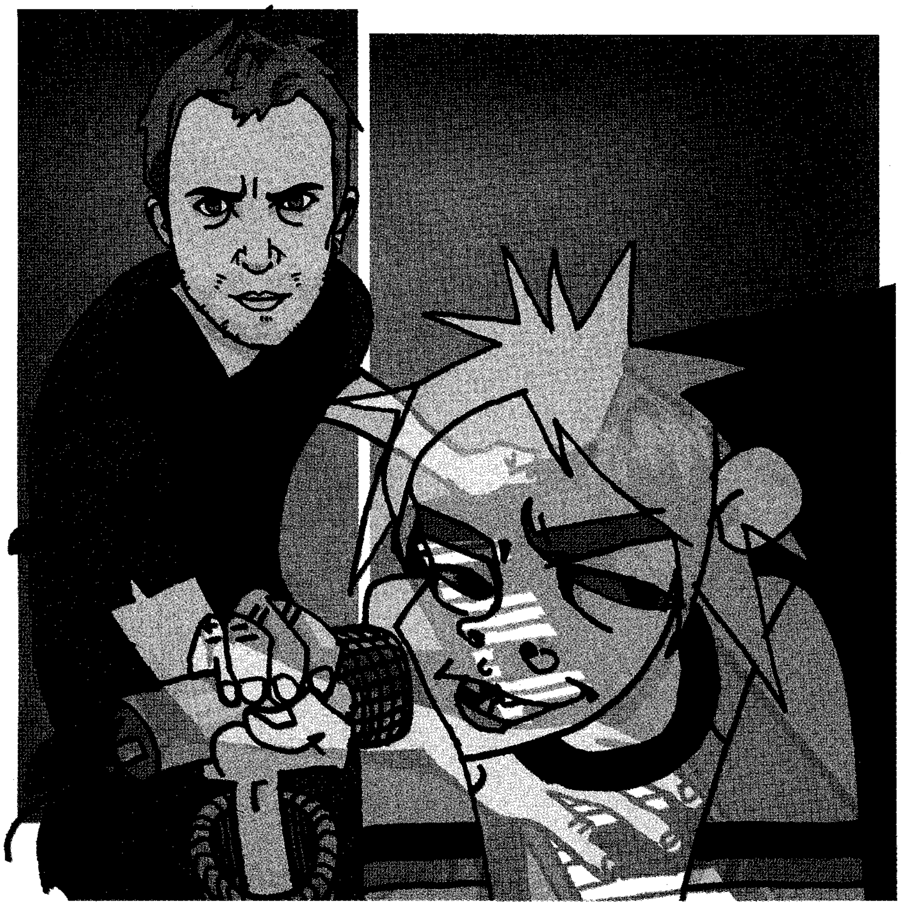
POP MUSIC

DAMON'S DAY

A British rocker redraws his boundaries.

BY SASHA FRERE-JONES

If Americans are familiar with the thirty-seven-year-old British musician Damon Albarn, it is largely because of his rock band Blur's 1997 hit "Song 2," a rambunctious blast of doggerel that is still played in sports arenas and commonly referred to by its wordless chorus: "Woo-hoo!" In Britain, Blur's popularity peaked in the late nineties; by the time "Song 2" appeared, the band was routinely mocked as a group of posh softies—"students," in the country's class-conscious vernacular of derision—by fans of its principal and more successful rival, Oasis, a standard-bearer for foulmouthed, lager-positive "lad" culture. Yet Albarn was just getting interesting. As Blur stalled out, Albarn went to Africa and made an album with Afel Bocoum, who trained with the legendary Malian guitarist Ali Farka Touré, and helped produce reissues of Trinidadian calypso and reggae music for Honest Jons, a London record label that he co-founded.



The animated 2D, of Gorillaz, allows Damon Albarn to work with anyone he wants.

In 2000, Albarn and a friend, Jamie Hewlett, formed a new band, Gorillaz, officially consisting of four cartoon characters: 2D, a spacey blue-haired singer; Murdoc, a creepy bassist; Noodle, a Japanese female guitarist; and Russel, a hulking black drummer. (Imagine a post-punk version of Josie and the Pussycats.) The cartoon band, which was drawn by Hewlett, a professional artist who is famous for creating the comic strip "Tank Girl," was an ingenious conceit, enabling Albarn to orchestrate a comeback without showing his face. Albarn, who writes the band's songs and plays almost all the instruments, could now make music with whomever he pleased, and without the problems that plague live groups—members who show up hung over at rehearsals or photo shoots, or who simply quit. A cartoon band can run forever.

Gorillaz was instantly successful: its first album, "Gorillaz," sold 1.6 million copies in the United States, partly on the strength of the band's videos, which combine old-fashioned hand-drawn animation, computer-generated effects, and live-action photography. Two Gorillaz videos from 2001 are currently on the iTunes Top 100 video chart. The characters don't talk in the videos, and the visual scenarios—one of which features the band members sitting silently in a dune buggy that is rocketing over what looks like the Golden Gate Bridge—usually have little to do with the song lyrics, which tend to be collections of pleasant-sounding catchphrases: "Get the cool shoeshine," "Are we the last living souls?" The images are gorgeous, but what makes Gorillaz universally appealing is Albarn's music, a blend of low-key hip-hop and mellifluous pop, ornamented by an assortment of African and Asian instruments. The new Gorillaz album, "Demon Days," which was released in May, has lingered in the Top Forty of the U.S. charts for six months, and sales here of the group's two albums have exceeded those of all eight Blur albums combined.

At the center of a typical Gorillaz song is a sunny and slightly childlike sound: a sweet melodic figure, a piano trill, or a burst of children's voices. Albarn's triumph is in preventing his friendly tootling from becoming cloying; he succeeds no doubt partly because he co-produced the Gorillaz albums with hip-hop artists, the first one with Dan (The Automator) Nakamura, the second with Brian Burton, a.k.a. Danger Mouse. Albarn also enlisted guest artists for both albums, including the rappers Del Tha Funky Homosapien and De La Soul and the singers Neneh

JASHAR AWAN

Cherry and Shaun Ryder, all of whom had big careers in the nineties which have since waned.

This may say more about Albarn's catholic taste than about his ability to sign up current stars. Like the French-Spanish musician and producer Manu Chao, Albarn is a mercurial synthesist who weaves together bits of rock, pop, and reggae without condescending to any of them. This spring, the single "Feel Good Inc." was featured in an iPod commercial and went on to become a hit. "Feel Good Inc.," a tightly wound hip-hop song, is memorable for Albarn's forlorn hoots and for what sounds like a guitar theme from a sixties spy movie.

In early November, Gorillaz became—briefly—human. On five sold-out nights, the songs from "Demon Days" were performed at the Manchester Opera House in England, by a cast of more than eighty: a rock band, a string section, guest stars, two choirs—one composed of twenty-five local children—and Albarn, who sat far upstage, behind the bassist and the guitarist, playing the piano and singing. Bits of Gorillaz imagery were projected onto a screen at the very back of the stage, all of which was pleasant but superfluous.

The show hit an early high with "Dirty Harry," the album's best song and, in the U.K., its current single. On the album, the sampled drumbeat lopes along, full of good cheer, while a keyboard picks out a simple motif, skipping up a few notes and going right back down. Accompanied by a children's choir, Albarn sings the song's brief, oblique lyric in falsetto: "I need a gun / to keep myself among / the poor people who are burning in the sun. / They ain't got a chance, / they ain't got a chance. / I need a gun, 'cause all I do is dance." But the track owes its forward momentum to two big hand claps that fall on the second and fourth beats, a flurry of strings, and Bootie Brown, from the Californian rap group the Pharcyde, who performs a long, fevered rap about being a "peace-lovin' decoy."

In Manchester, "Dirty Harry" was transformed from sly and cool into thumping and imposing. Albarn's tidy little melodies sound like folk anthems when sung in public by so many voices. When Bootie Brown hurled his rhymes at the crowd, three children in the choir began amateurish break dancing. The audience, a mix of teen-agers and thirty-somethings, was momentarily transfixed.

The show couldn't sustain that kind of collective euphoria, and didn't need to. At the end of "Every Planet We Reach Is Dead," which alternates expertly between a lumbering blues riff and one of Albarn's sugary vocal arrangements (the song is about a dreamer who has lost a leg and pines for a girl), Ike Turner strode onto the stage in a spangly white-and-red jacket. He sat down at the piano, smiled, and played a barrelhouse piano solo that evolved into free-jazz banging. Then he leaped up, waved goodbye, and was gone.

The audience's most generous applause went to the worst performance. Shaun Ryder, a Manchester native who once belonged to the band Happy Mondays but is now referred to in the British press as an "incoherent drug dustbin," appeared onstage for the song "DARE" (the title doesn't stand for anything). Clutching a bottle of orange liquid and looking decades older than his forty-three years, Ryder struggled gamely to deliver his big line: "It's coming up, it's coming up, it's . . . *dare!*" Though his singing was not in time with the music, Ryder received a standing ovation, mostly, perhaps, for not being dead.

Albarn didn't appear at the front of the stage until the end of the show, when he joined a Chinese zither player, Zeng Zhen, to perform a delicate song called "Hong Kong." Albarn, dressed in a black short-sleeved Fred Perry shirt and baggy jeans, looked more like a stagehand than the evening's mastermind. Sweetly and clearly, he sang, "Lord, hear me now / Junk boats and English boys / Crashing out in super malls / Electric fences and guns," and was rewarded with sustained applause. After the show, the crowd filed out, teen-agers carrying plastic cups of lager and laughing while thumbing messages on their cell phones. One young boy clutching a program held his father's hand. Sleepily, he asked his dad if Gorillaz was really real. ♦

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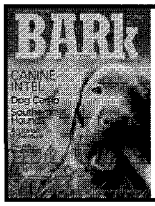

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WHITE ON WHITE

Three classics.

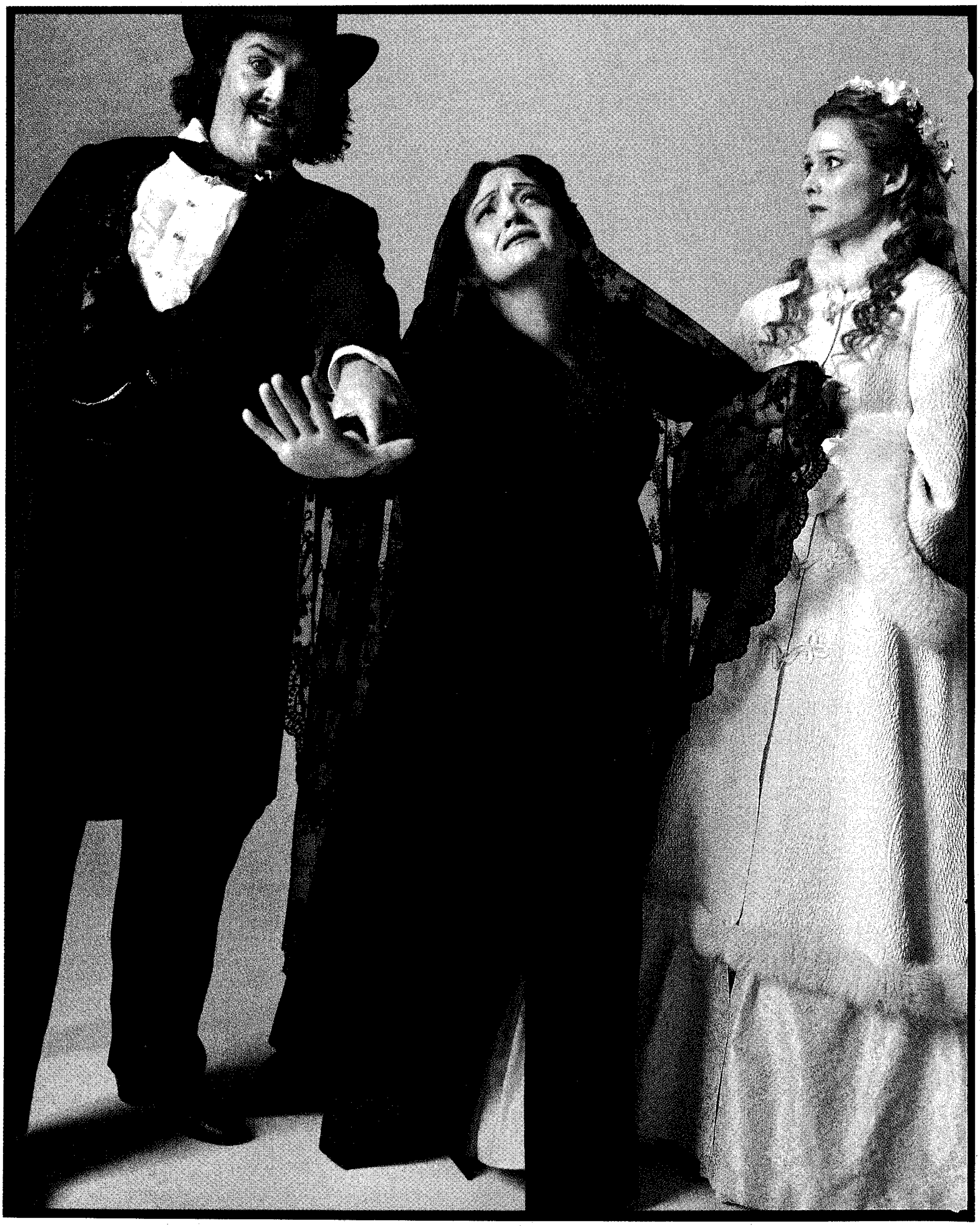
BY HILTON ALS

Years ago, an outrageous young man-about-town used to attend all sorts of parties, both high and low. And some of the more popular gatherings were theme-based. Generally, these were hosted by young men who had an almost fanatical interest in the camp elements to be found in films like "Showgirls" and in nearly any musical written by the English composer Andrew Lloyd Webber. Indeed, many of the parties were built around Webber's wildly popular musicals "Cats" and "Sunset Boulevard." Besides playing the shows' cast recordings—loudly—on a CD player, guests would arrive dressed like Glenn Close as Norma Desmond in the latter show, or like Betty Buckley in the former. Webber's latest offering, "The Woman in White" (at the Marquis), should bring similar hours of pleasure to such an audience, largely because the score and the lyrics (by David Zippel) are so over-the-top dramatic that it's impossible to have anything approaching real feeling for any of the characters, let alone their situations. And, since camp is the denial of feeling, "The Woman in White" is a perfect camp object: all hysterical action, with artifice as its heart.

Although the show is said to be "freely adapted" from Wilkie Collins's creepy nineteenth-century novel about doubling—in the book, the characters don't know it at first, but they are all related in one way or another—it's difficult to discern whether it was Charlotte Jones, who adapted the novel to the stage, or Webber, or the director, Trevor Nunn, who dispensed with Collins's Grand Guignol sense of things. Whoever it was, Collins's Victorian interest in depth of character has been replaced by ominous-sounding music, fog machines, and a gothic set. What we are left with is characters straight out of Edward Gorey, but without Gorey's customary elegance or his delight in revealing the smiler with the knife.

Curtain up: a thin, pale, ginger-haired young woman dressed in white and named Anne Catherick (Angela Christian) is wandering about near the grounds of a great estate, Limmeridge House, in Cumberland, England. Is she real, or a ghost? The artist and drawing teacher Walter Hartright (Adam Brazier) is not quite sure. Nevertheless, he's spooked. But Hartright's stalwart hunkiness wins out after he meets his students, the lively Marian (Maria Friedman, who is by far the best thing in the show) and her half sister, Laura (Jill Paice), who live at Limmeridge with Laura's rich, infirm uncle, Mr. Fairlie (Walter Charles). Love ensues: Walter and Laura are swept up by the force of desire. But wait. Laura has promised her father on his deathbed that she will marry the smarmy, evil Sir Percival Glyde (Ron Bohmer). And Marian insists on this union, in part because she's slightly jealous of Walter's admiration for Laura, and their subsequent duet. Laura bears an uncanny resemblance to the woman in white, an apparition or mad creature who is never far from the gloom that dampens the characters' operatic flounces and furbelows. Before long, Laura is wearing a white dress of her own: she's a bride, but an unhappy one. Sir Percival, along with his cohort the freeloading Count Fosco (Michael Ball), beats her and then commits her to an insane asylum. The two have designs on her fortune. As it turns out, the institution where Laura is meant to rot is the same asylum that Anne was sent to many years ago—by Sir Percival. After she fell in love with him, she had his child, which he drowned. Oh, and Anne, by the way, is Laura's half sister. They had the same father—facts that no one ever mentions until the second half of the show, when Laura is rescued from the asylum by Marian and Walter, who has never got over her.

It's not easy to judge the actors, the play, or Webber's score, because they're all of a piece: early Gilbert and George with a little Rasputina and Vegas thrown in for good measure. And none of these ele-



Michael Ball, Maria Friedman, and Jill Paice, in Andrew Lloyd Webber's new musical. Photograph by Brigitte Lacombe.

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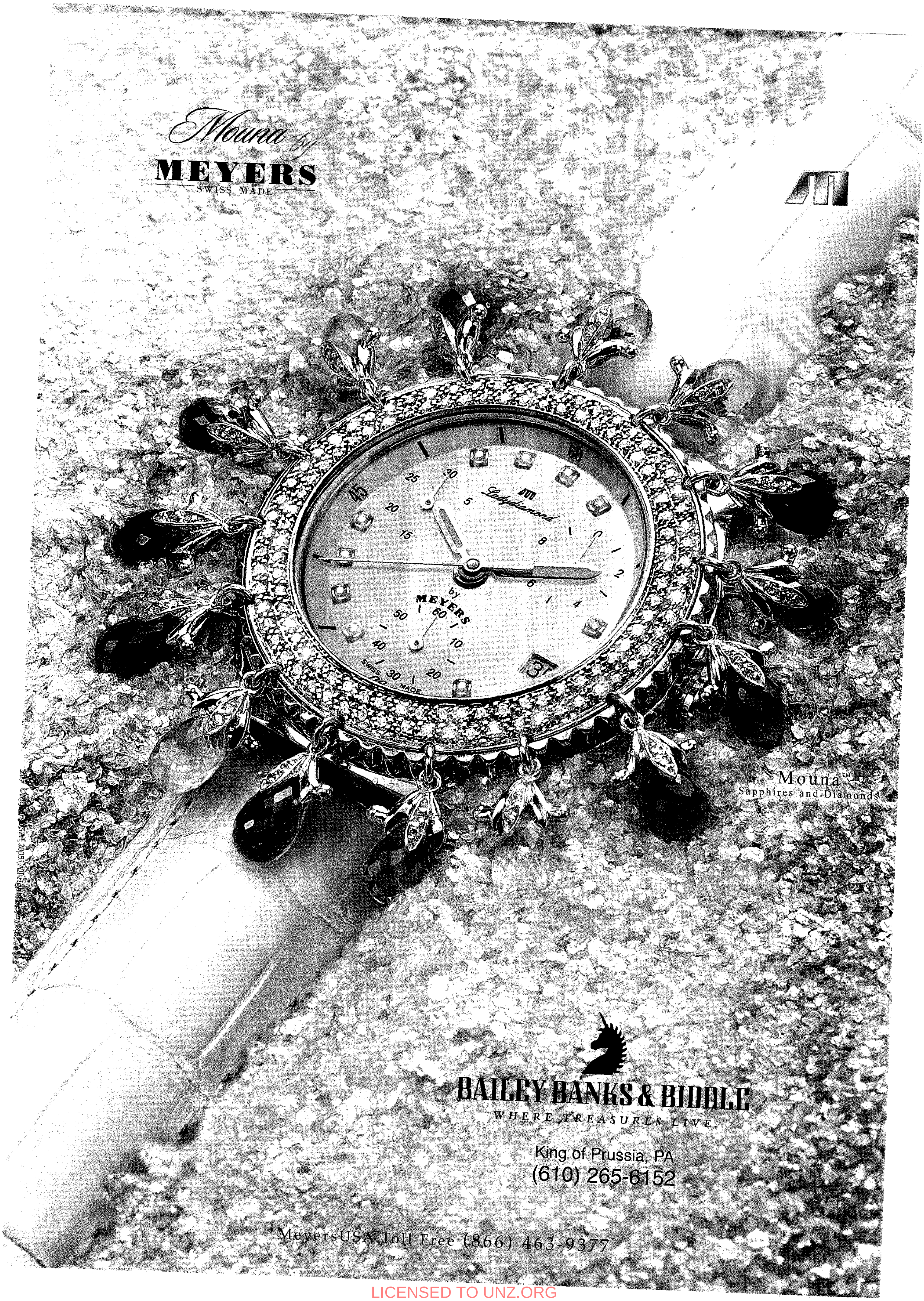
ments are especially memorable. Webber's music feels like a film score written in support of the show's real star: the lighting (by Paul Pyant) and the video images (designed by William Dudley and the team of Dick Straker and Sven Ortel, at Mesmer). Nunn relies on these three-dimensional projections of hills and dales and manor houses as they are cast on a revolving wall and floor, and their movement keeps the action going. But to what end? Where is the show taking us? One can imagine that "The Woman in White" will soon be played at parties hosted by those in the audience who have seen that it is firmly in the canon of camp.

Say what you will about the Classic Stage Company's problematic production of "Hamlet," there's no denying that the director—the C.S.C.'s artistic director, Brian Kulick—has managed to bring a fresh perspective to the play, particularly in the first half. Here the curtain—a white paper scrim—rises on a snowy Elsinore. The floors and walls of the castle are white, and made whiter still by blinding stage lights. Most of the characters—except Hamlet (Michael Cumpsty), of course—are dressed in white, as though a virginal appearance could disguise their bloody motives. After Hamlet confronts his mother in the famous bedroom scene ("Mother, you have my father much offended") and kills Polonius (Herb Foster), the brilliant costume designer, Oana Botez-Ban, re-clothes the remaining cast members in gray, black, and brown—colors that evoke not only the dead soil beneath the snowy wastes but the gloom that Hamlet has managed to unearth in the lives around him.

Unfortunately, the casting in this production does not live up to the scenic elements. Despite his beautiful and expressive flat-as-a-plate face, the forty-seven-year-old Cumpsty, who has a great deal of physical grace and energy (and who used both to hilarious effect last season as the philandering husband in "The Constant Wife"), is too old for the part, too adult to play Shakespeare's man-child trying to make sense of a world that is not of his own making. Bombastic when he should be self-doubting, Cumpsty's Hamlet lords it over his fellow cast members like a stage manager who is too wise by half. Similarly miscast is Kellie Overbey, as Ophelia. It's hard to tell whether she has been under-directed or just hasn't discovered for herself who Ophelia is. In any case, she fades from view long before she offers her brother Laertes (Karl Kenzler) rosemary for remembrance. And as for Robert Dorfman's Claudius—well, one can't help being flummoxed by him. Dorfman plays Gertrude's husband as though he were David Gest, hungry for a photo op—no matter that Gertrude is no Liza Minnelli. He brings a cheap show-biz sheen to the classic.

The show's unexpected high point is Caroline Lagerfelt, as Gertrude, who gives off a light that is all her own. Lagerfelt works hard to peel away Gertrude's layers—to reveal the fundamental innocence of this woman who clearly believes she has married for love, and who struggles to mother a household of men at war. In this production, it's not hard to see why Hamlet and Claudius must compete over Gertrude in order to feel whole themselves. Lagerfelt projects grace and understanding in a milieu that understands neither. And it is in this attempt to bring warmth and humor—and a touch of the absurd—to Shakespeare's castle of confusion that Kulick's "Hamlet" distinguishes itself as unique, if not entirely successful.

A similar spirit of adventurousness is missing from the director Alan Hruska's take on Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" (at the Theatre at St. Clement's). Commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the play's Broadway première, this production is a wash: tedious, pedantic, and entirely lacking in the Laurel-and-Hardy humor that was essential to Beckett's vision of a demystified world. His quest for a kind of latter-day spiritualism—evocative of the philosopher Simone Weil's fragmented and luminous collection "Waiting for God"—eludes Hruska altogether. The only person here who gets it is Martin Shakar. Playing Lucky as a slave who wouldn't know what to do with himself if he weren't indentured, Shakar mimes his part with a kind of defeated grace. Sam Coppola, on the other hand, plays Vladimir as if he were the hapless protagonist of a Neil Simon comedy—he's all whines and distance. Coppola's drone dominates Beckett's poetry; instead of watching in wonder as Beckett's bulbs bloom in winter, we're left with nothing but bitter earth. ♦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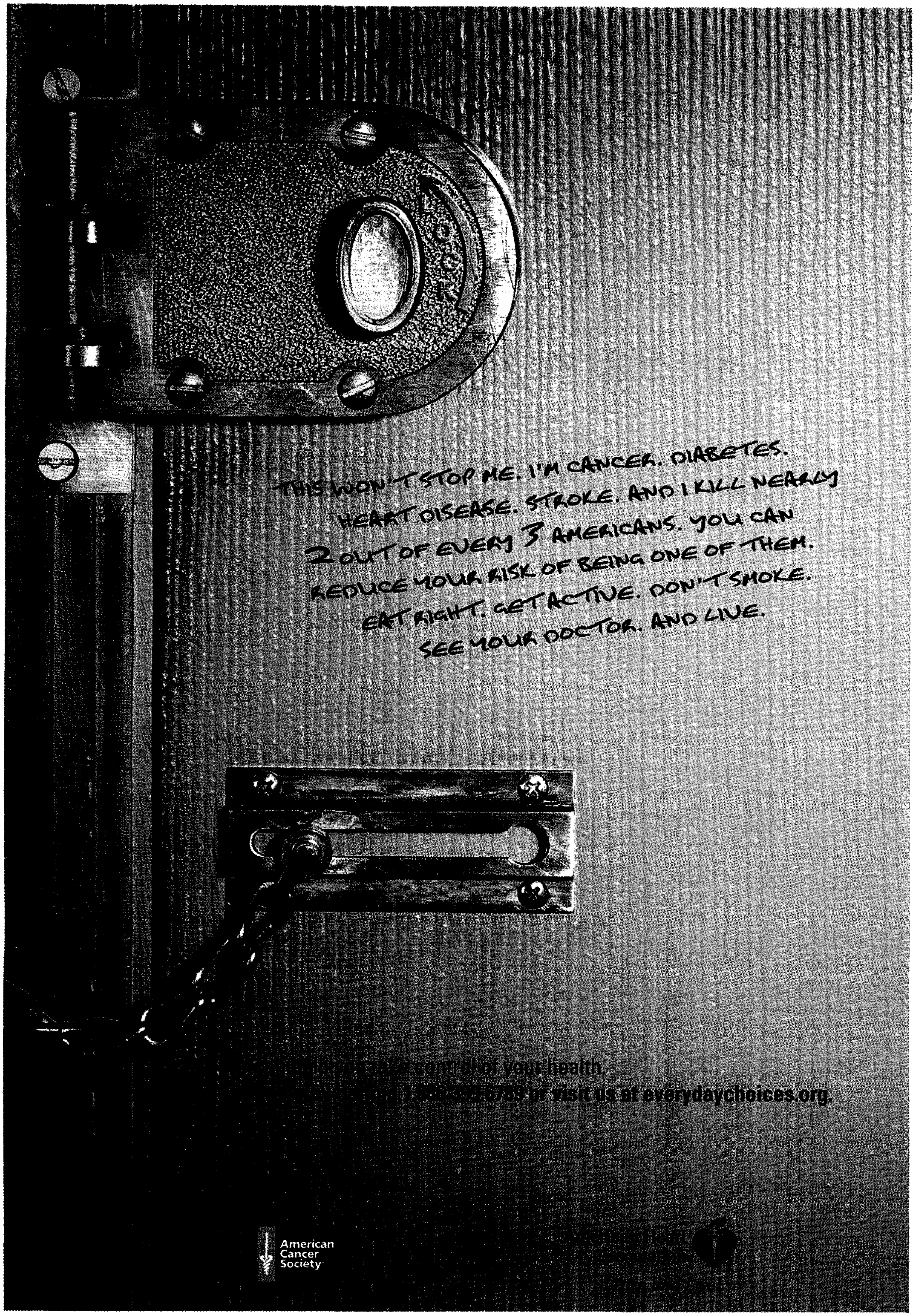

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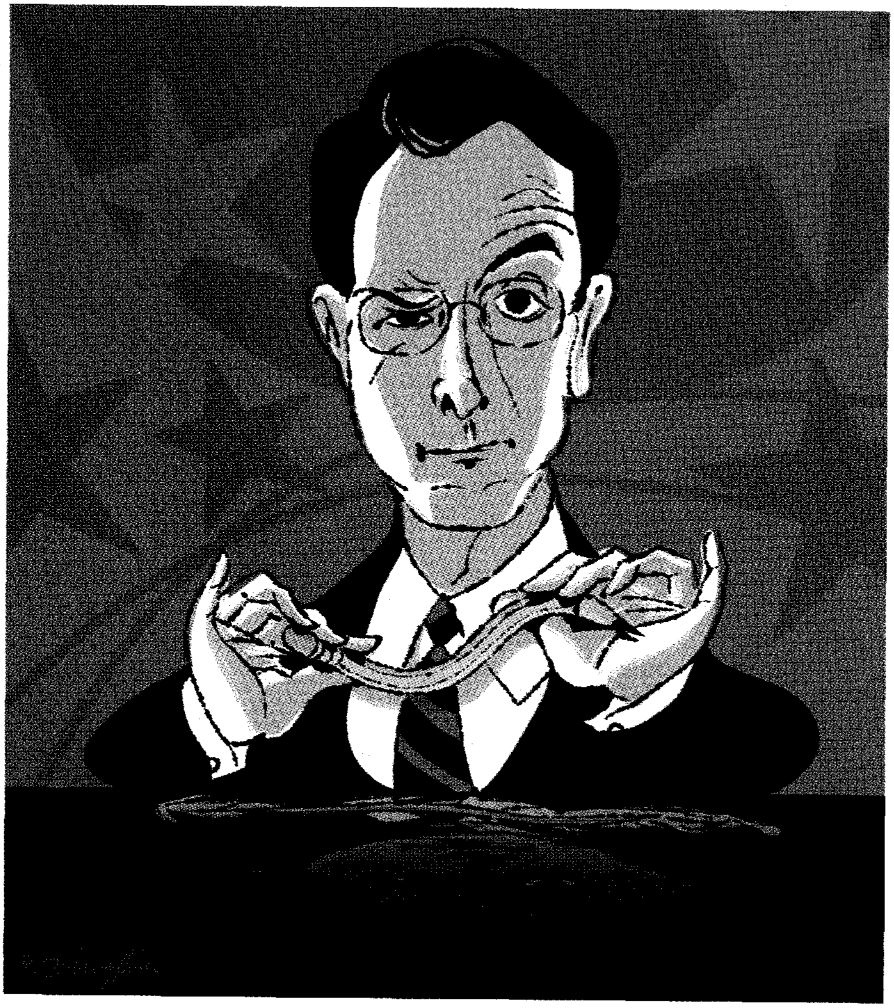
"The Colbert Report" and "The Boondocks."

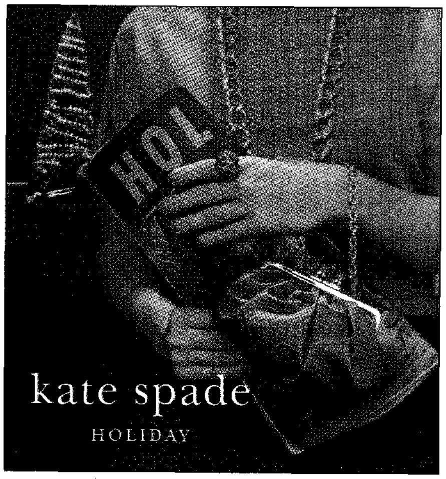
BY NANCY FRANKLIN



The airwaves are alive with the sound of Stephen Colbert's news stylings.

EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

If you watch "The Colbert Report" a few times, hearing Stephen Colbert introduce his show by pronouncing "report" without the "t"—to match the silent one in his last name (it's pronounced Cole-*bare*)—will stop sounding odd. (It won't be funny anymore, either, but then it was funny only the first time anyway.) In fact, hearing the word pronounced correctly may start to sound odd; Colbert's articulateness and sonorous intonations add up to such a credible imitation of telegenic self-assuredness and conviction that everything he says sounds right. He's a trim, well-groomed fellow who dresses in Brooks Brothers suits and comes across as a family man, a solid citizen, and a believer in making a good impression, thereby disguising his true intention as a comic performer, which is to pull the rug out from under anyone who happens to be standing on a rug. "The Colbert Report" is an offspring of Comedy Central's "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart," and comes on immediately afterward, at eleven-thirty (each show is rerun four times the next day); in some ways, it seems like an extension of Stewart's "fake news" show, partly because Colbert worked on that show for many years (even before Stewart took over as host from Craig Kilborn) and partly because both are concerned



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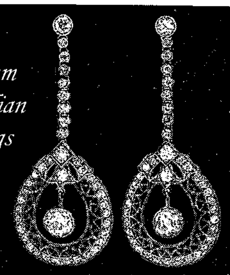
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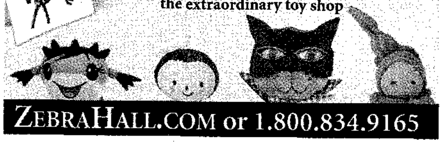
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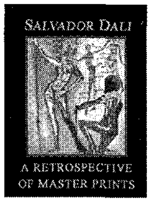

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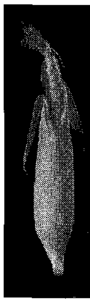

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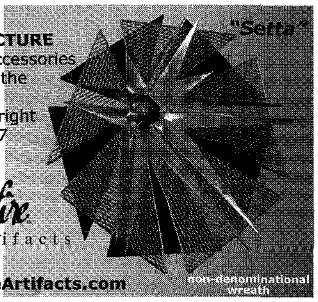

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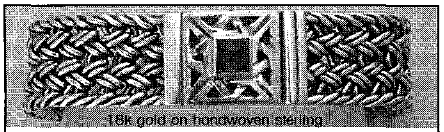

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with politicians and the media. But Stewart's humor has more to do with, to take the title page from Al Franken's book, lies and the lying liars who tell them; Colbert goes after politicians, but he's even more keen on lampooning people who love the sound of their own voice and the medium that enables them to broadcast it. Stewart's satirical net goes deeper, and Colbert's goes wider.

One of the nice, and funny, things about the juxtaposition of the two shows is the way Stewart tosses the ball, as it were, to Colbert at the end of "The Daily Show." He announces that it's time to check in with our friend Stephen Colbert, at which point Colbert, sitting at his own anchor desk, comes on camera and says something windbaggy and obnoxious to Stewart. Stewart takes obvious pleasure in being mocked by his colleague; he and his executive producer, Ben Karlin, are the executive producers of "The Colbert Report," along with Colbert, and so you might expect this kind of warmth. But there's always room for mixed feelings, and it wouldn't be the first time a human being tried to thwart someone he was ostensibly promoting; in any case, there's none of that to be seen here.

I find Colbert both exhausting and refreshing. His voice is insistent, and he wears a frown most of the time; he modulates his comments not by changing his tone of voice but with body language, so it's a bit much on your ears. Speaking of ears, Stewart's and Colbert's shows both feature inordinately loud and long applause from the audience at the beginning of each program and before and after each commercial break. That's true of the David Letterman and Ellen DeGeneres shows as well, but on those shows at least the audience members participate in the action. Their enthusiasm is an organic part of the show. We never see the audience at Stewart's show and only rarely at Colbert's, and, considering the kind of success and cultural validation that Stewart has received in the past five years, there's something masturbatory about his leaving in every second of the raucous adulation, as if he were Portnoy and the audience his slab of liver. (Talk of onanism comes easily in regard to Stewart, since he is preoccupied with balls—specifically, with whether politicians have them or not. Colbert is, too, as his guest Fareed Zakaria amusedly pointed out to him in the third show. And, really, why else have the editor of *Newsweek International* on your program if not to raise viewers' awareness of such an important issue?)

Colbert plays around with his role as entertainer and host; each night, when he interviews a guest, he jogs over to a table where the guest is sitting (waiting in the dark for him) and raises his hands in self-approbation, as if he had just won an election. It's all about him, and he has enough narcissism for two: last week, in a sketch called "Formidable Opponent," he had a debate with himself. Congratulating himself on making a point about the Senate's recent vote to ban torture, he said of the compliment, "Coming from you that means a lot." Colbert's show is a nightly festival of fatuity. (Now, don't confuse that with the nightly festival of flatulence that follows it on Comedy Central, the talk show "Too Late with Adam Carolla." Recently, Carolla began a show by saying to David Alan Grier, "I want to talk about a lot of things, one of them is your Escalade." Last week, when Carson Daly was Carolla's guest, it came to light that Jimmy Kimmel had discovered both of them. Whoever discovered Jimmy Kimmel now has even more to answer for.) Colbert resembles nobody more than he does Bill O'Reilly, and, like O'Reilly, he conveys fake humility and easy rage toward inappropriate targets. On the first night, Colbert said that the program was dedicated to "you the heroes," explaining that the heroes are "the people who watch this show." In a nightly feature called "The Word," he introduced that night's entry: "truthiness." Contemptuously acknowledging those who deny the word's existence, Colbert excoriated the "wordinistas over at Webster's" and dismissed dictionaries and reference books as élitist. A couple of weeks ago, he went after black holes: "I'm going on the record as being against this swirling vortex of nothingness. . . . Let me tell you something, black hole. You may have swallowed a hundred million suns, but now you're dealing with America." Pointing his finger at the camera, Colbert made one more rhetorical flourish: "Black hole at the center of the galaxy? You're on notice."

For all the delightful wordplay and nonsense, Colbert comes across pretty stiffly much of the time, because he remains in character during the whole show. There's not a lot of breathing room, or

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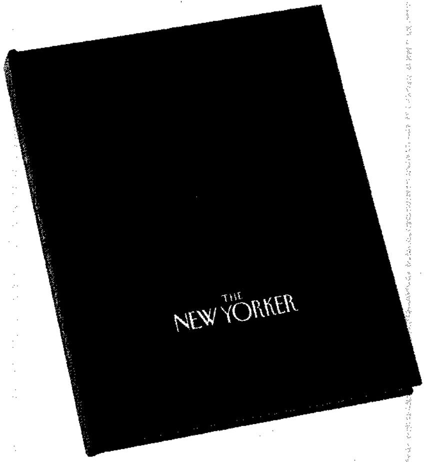

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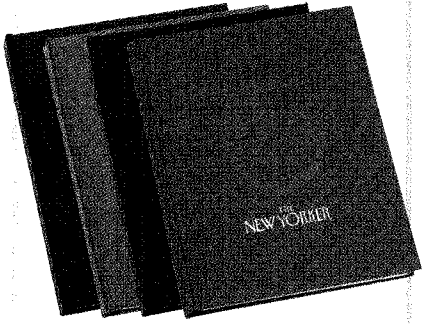

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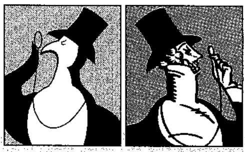

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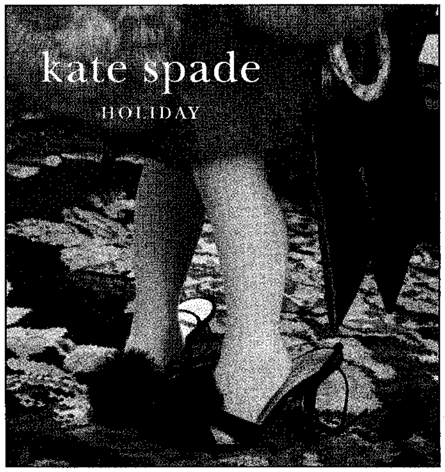
room for any real seriousness, as there is on Stewart's show. (Both shows, regrettably, do field interviews with people who have no idea they're going to be ridiculed on national TV, and who have made a good-faith effort to accommodate these fake-news correspondents. Sometimes the bits are funny; but that doesn't mean they're anything to be proud of. Colbert's aim is to "interview" every member of the House of Representatives. So far, he has abused the hospitality of three of them, including, notably, Barney Frank, who didn't "get it" that Colbert was making sophomoric jokes to his face about his homosexuality.) Colbert is very skillful at parodying people who are already parodies of themselves, and his show is a lot sharper than most of what passes for comedy on TV. At the end of the day, though—a day, say, on which a President says something foolish, or a Supreme Court nominee has to step aside, or a White House aide is indicted—the voice you'll most want to hear is still Jon Stewart's.

Aaron McGruder has ridden a long way on the coattails of controversy. His comic strip "The Boondocks," about two black boys who started life on the South Side of Chicago but now live with their grandfather in a middle-class suburb, has a lot of anger in it—at any rate, more anger than the usual comic strip, or even the unusual comic strip. The older boy, Huey Freeman, who is ten, is named after Huey Newton, the Black Panther, and he's angry at stupid white people and stupid black people. He wears a perpetual scowl. Since the strip began syndication, in 1999, it has been pulled by newspaper editors a number of times, which is almost like being given the Pulitzer Prize. McGruder has spent several years working with a friend, the movie director Reginald Hudlin, to turn the strip into an animated cartoon show, and it has now débuted, on the Cartoon Network. (It can be seen at eleven on Sunday nights.) The show, like the strip, has been called controversial, mainly because its characters say the word "nigga." (They do in the strip, too, but it's written "n**a.") There is not a single fresh moment in the three episodes that have run so far; it turns out you can be controversial without being the least bit interesting. The show refuses to come alive, no matter how much hot air McGruder blows into it. ♦



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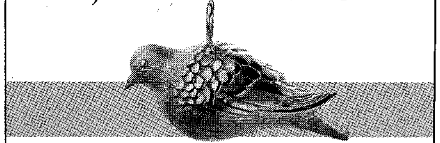

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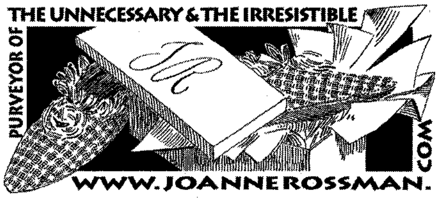

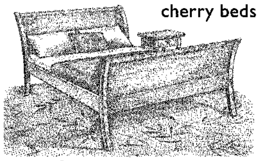

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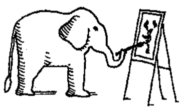

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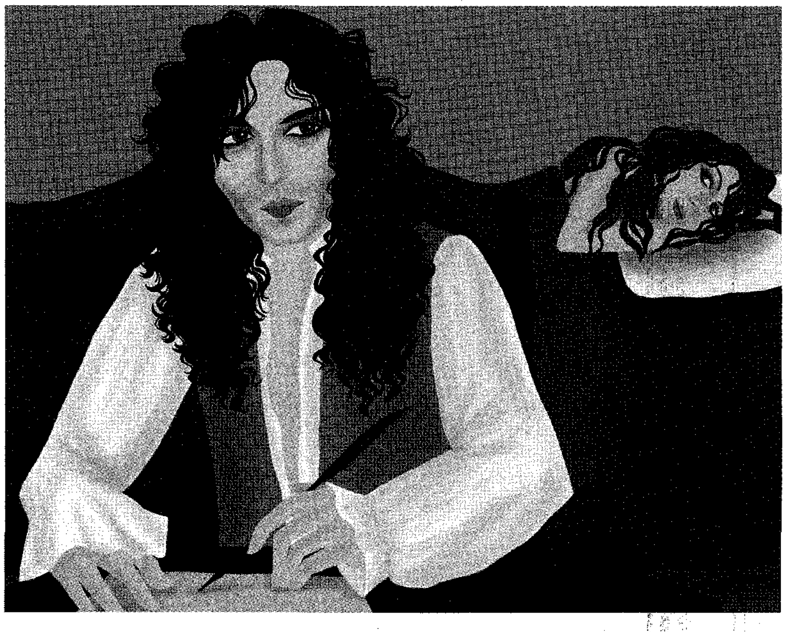
THE CURRENT CINEMA

BOY WONDERS

"The Libertine" and "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire."

BY ANTHONY LANE



Johnny Depp as Rochester and Samantha Morton as the actress Elizabeth Barry.

DIVYA SRINIVASAN

Of the many virtues that unite Harvard, Princeton, and the University of Illinois, the most compelling is the fact that the library of each institution contains a manuscript version of the following poem. It is called "The Wish," and I quote it in full:

> Oh, that I could by any chemic art
> To sperm convert my spirit and my
>   heart,
> That at one thrust I might my soul
>   translate
> And in the womb myself regenerate!
> There steeped in lust nine months I
>   would remain,
> Then boldly fuck my passage back
>   again.

Four aspects of this work immediately spring to mind. First, and most obvious, it renders the lifelong labors of Sigmund Freud almost entirely superfluous. Second, it has been credited to the pen of John Wilmot, second Earl of Rochester, although scholarly doubt surrounds the attribution. Third, if Rochester did write the poem he must have done so at the age of *fourteen*. And, fourth, he is now the subject of a film.

Sadly, the movie in question is not a dramatic adaptation of "The Wish," which is surely crying out for the digital talents of Pixar, but a bio-pic entitled "The Libertine." Written by Stephen Jeffreys and directed by Laurence Dunmore, it stars Johnny Depp as Rochester. If you threw together a beefy blend of Depp's other roles—a shot of Hunter S. Thompson, a slice of Jack the pirate, a mouthful of Willy Wonka—you could scarcely hope to concoct anything as highly seasoned as His Lordship. "You will not like me," he declares at the start, with more than a touch of the imperative. He peers at us from a backdrop so rich in gloom that it might as well be the nether depths of Hell—which, for anyone wishing to pinpoint Rochester's current location, remains the most plausible place to begin.

His reluctant emergence from the womb took place in 1647, and he went to his grave in 1680, hurried along by the pox. The wonder is not that he expired so young but that he endured so long, having packed more transgres-

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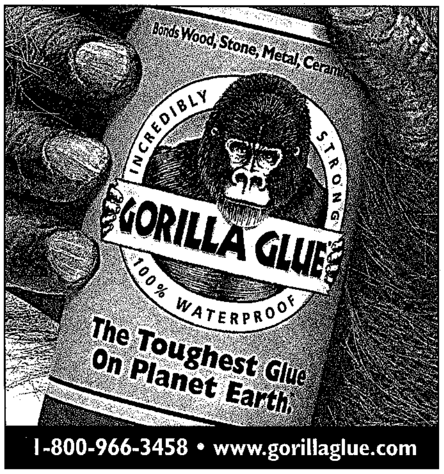

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sions into one of his lazier evenings than most of us rack up in a decade. To say that Rochester was a philanderer is like suggesting that Dean Martin was fond of a tipple. Mind you, the poet's own leaning toward the bottle was close to Martinesque. He was double trouble:

Cupid and Bacchus my saints are.
May drink and love still reign,
With wine I wash away my cares
And then to cunt again.

What matters about Rochester is that, unlike the majority of sex addicts, he never allowed his addiction to shrink him into a bore. Instead, his curiosity swelled to encompass the rest of the population, whom he cheerfully imagined—with a scabrous presumption not heard since the Rome of Juvenal—to be every bit as addicted as he. Hence "A Ramble in St. James's Park," with its democratic overview of lust:

Car-men, divines, great lords, and tailors,
'Prentices, pimps, poets, and jailers,
Footmen, fine fops do here arrive,
And here promiscuously they swive.

That is one of the quieter moments in the poem. Other passages stream past in which the only vaguely respectable noun is "sluice." The result is not just polluted but also crisp and funny, although you would never know that from the film, in which Depp recites a few lines in a morose incantation and, wandering through the park in a mist, finds himself besieged by visions of writhing orgiasts. They resemble one of the more unfortunate dream sequences from an old Ken Russell picture, whereas the actual Rochester was laying out, with unblinking eyes, the map of a well-known world. As for the mist, it never clears; most of "The Libertine" unfurls in a soup of brown light. It cannot be smog, because Rochester predated the industrial revolution, so I conclude that the director, who plainly fancies himself a symbolist, is bent on moral miasma. One gets the point, but again it muddies the clarity and verve with which Rochester confronted his times.

Wisely, Dunmore makes no attempt to cover the poet's entire life; it may have been short, but then so is a mortar attack. We see nothing of Rochester's Grand Tour through Europe, say, or his reported courage in two naval battles. We see his patient wife (Rosamund Pike), whom he feels up in the back of a jolting carriage, but not their four children. Instead, the movie plunges into the mid-sixteen-seventies, with Charles II (John Malkovich) long since restored to the throne and an elegant raillery unloosed upon the stage. A bored and boozy Rochester, himself restored after a period of disgrace—he was forever getting thrown out of court for doing or writing the wrong thing—hangs around with friends like Sir George Etherege (Tom Hollander). It was Etherege who immortalized him in his play "The Man of Mode": "I know he is a Devil, but he has something of the Angel yet undefac'd in him." What pricks the poet's interest, and vice versa, is the presence of a new actress, Elizabeth Barry (Samantha Morton), to whom he becomes a mentor. This is no cinematic fancy. She was indeed the leading lady of her day, and the correspondence between them is a stately procession of pain, affection, envy, reproach, and workaday desire: "Dear Madam," one letter begins, "You are stark mad, and therefore the fitter for me to love."

There is one overriding reason to watch "The Libertine," and that is the scene in which the hero instructs the heroine in the passionate possibilities of her art. She stands on the stage, with candles burning hazily like underwater flares, and, as the camera swims around her, she melts. It is one long seduction, and yet no clothes are removed; rather, her theatrical awkwardness is stripped away. Depp and Morton are really flying here, and they leave the rest of the film looking heavy on its feet. The second half, especially, grows dour and maundering, and by the end the movie seems to flail in desperation, more like a work in progress than like a finished piece. It was shot a while ago, and the makers evidently struggled to bring it to fruition; if so, they missed a trick. I counted four actors in "The Libertine" who also appear in the new "Pride & Prejudice"; so, why not go the whole hog, combine the two period dramas and thereby halve the budget? Who wouldn't want to watch five Bennet girls unleashed on Charles II? Rochester had a ball in St. James's Park, but, believe me, if you haven't seen Darcy on the loose, or the sluice, you don't know what swiving is.

Harry Potter (Daniel Radcliffe) is now fourteen, and, while he gives little sign of doing what Lord Rochester planned to do at the same age, there are nonetheless changes afoot. Harry's voice, like that of his best friend, Ron (Rupert Grint), sounds like the mating cry of an oboe, and, worse still, the two cease to be best friends. Meanwhile, at Hogwarts, all is set for the Triwizard Tournament. This involves three chosen students, each from a different school, meeting three herculean challenges; the victor receives a cup wrought of rarest crystal, the kind that you get for winning a pro-celebrity tennis fest in Palm Springs.

Such is the setting for "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire," the thirty-seventh—or "fourth," as Warner Bros. amusingly claims—installment in the Potterite saga. It is directed by Mike Newell, who does a more coherent job than his predecessors; they tended to linger over the early setups and then scramble toward a confusing climax, whereas Newell measures out the magic with some aplomb. Still, he cannot do much about the slightly tired sadism that is creeping into the cracks of the Potter franchise. The tournament, for instance, is hailed with rah-rah enthusiasm, like any other sporting event, yet it basically entails putting a bunch of young people through dragonish perils, and mortifying fear, all for the edification of the youthful masses and their freaky overlords. Caligula would have liked it.

By a pleasing irony, the parts of the film that stay with you are concerned not with the dark arts but with something far more unstoppable: teen-agers. There is a fine scene in which Harry, Ron, and the scarily poised Hermione (Emma Watson) are sitting in study hall and talking under their breath about the imminent school dance—who will go with whom, which sad student has yet to be asked, and so on. In short, they behave like humans (or Muggles, as we must call ourselves), and their chatter comes as a relief after the relentlessness of their enchanted lives. The unspoken apartheid of the J. K. Rowling world, where wizards look down, often literally, on the subspecies of regular folk, has meant that the movies dwell exclusively among wizards and follow wizard rules; might it not be, however, that the superhuman will retain its meaning, and its comic torque, only when entwined with aspects of the human? That is why Hermione, observing Ron and Harry in their galumphing efforts to make up, exclaims not "Wizards" but, in exasperation, "*Boys*." The film closes with yet another clash of good and evil—the most elemental to date, with Lord Voldemort himself (Ralph Fiennes) putting in a guest appearance and looking like the English Patient on steroids. What matters in "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire," though, and what will allow the remaining films to prosper, is the words that we hear at the start, from an elderly caretaker: "Bloody kids." ♦

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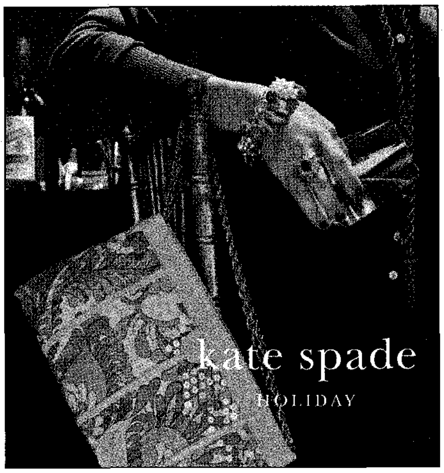

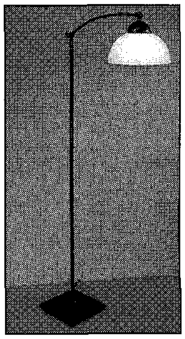
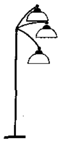
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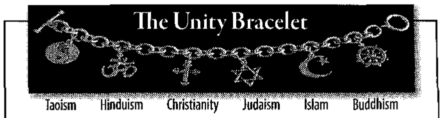

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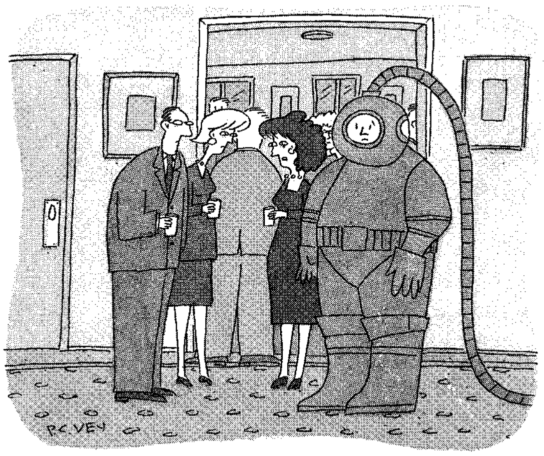
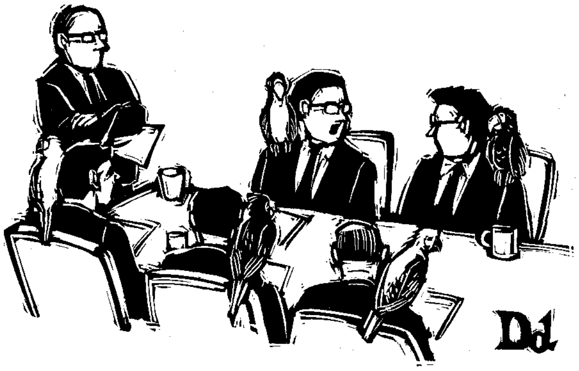
CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Gahan Wilson, must be received by Sunday, November 27th. Finalists in the November 14th contest appear below; go online to vote. We will announce the winner, along with the finalists in this week's contest, in the December 12th issue. The winner will be given a signed print of the cartoon. Any U.S. resident age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"Bob just came directly from work."
Mario Hieb, Salt Lake City, Utah



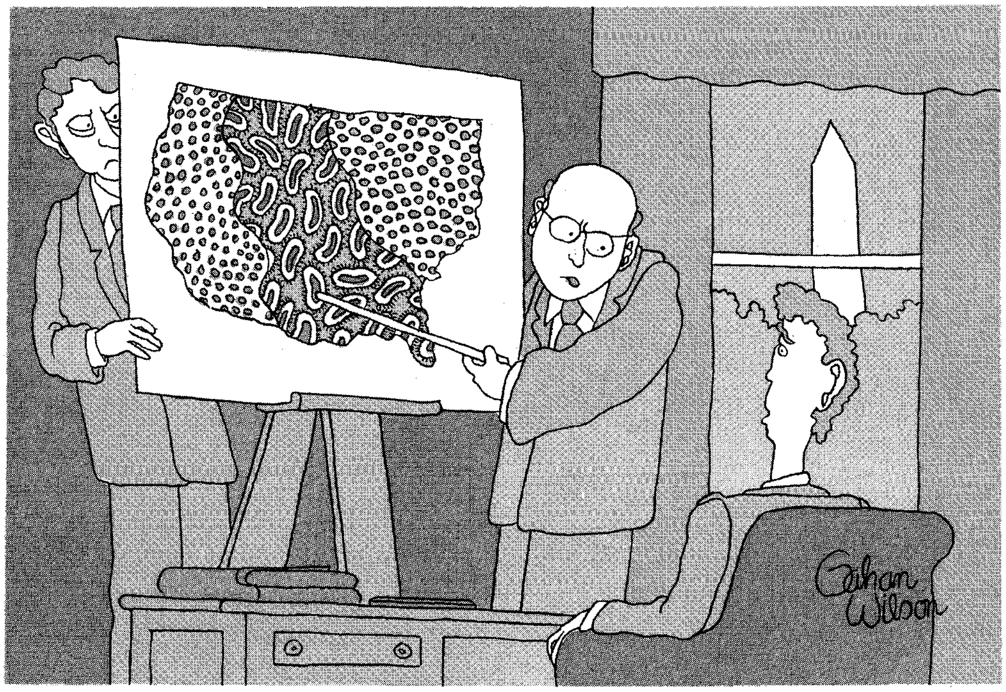
THE FINALISTS

"We have to find a better way to record our meetings."
Gina Quartermaine, Alexandria, Va.

"Well, it's not my fault booty revenues are down this quarter."
Ben Sadock, New York City

"Shut up, Bob, everyone knows your parrot's a clip-on."
Adam Szymkowicz, Shoreham, Vt.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



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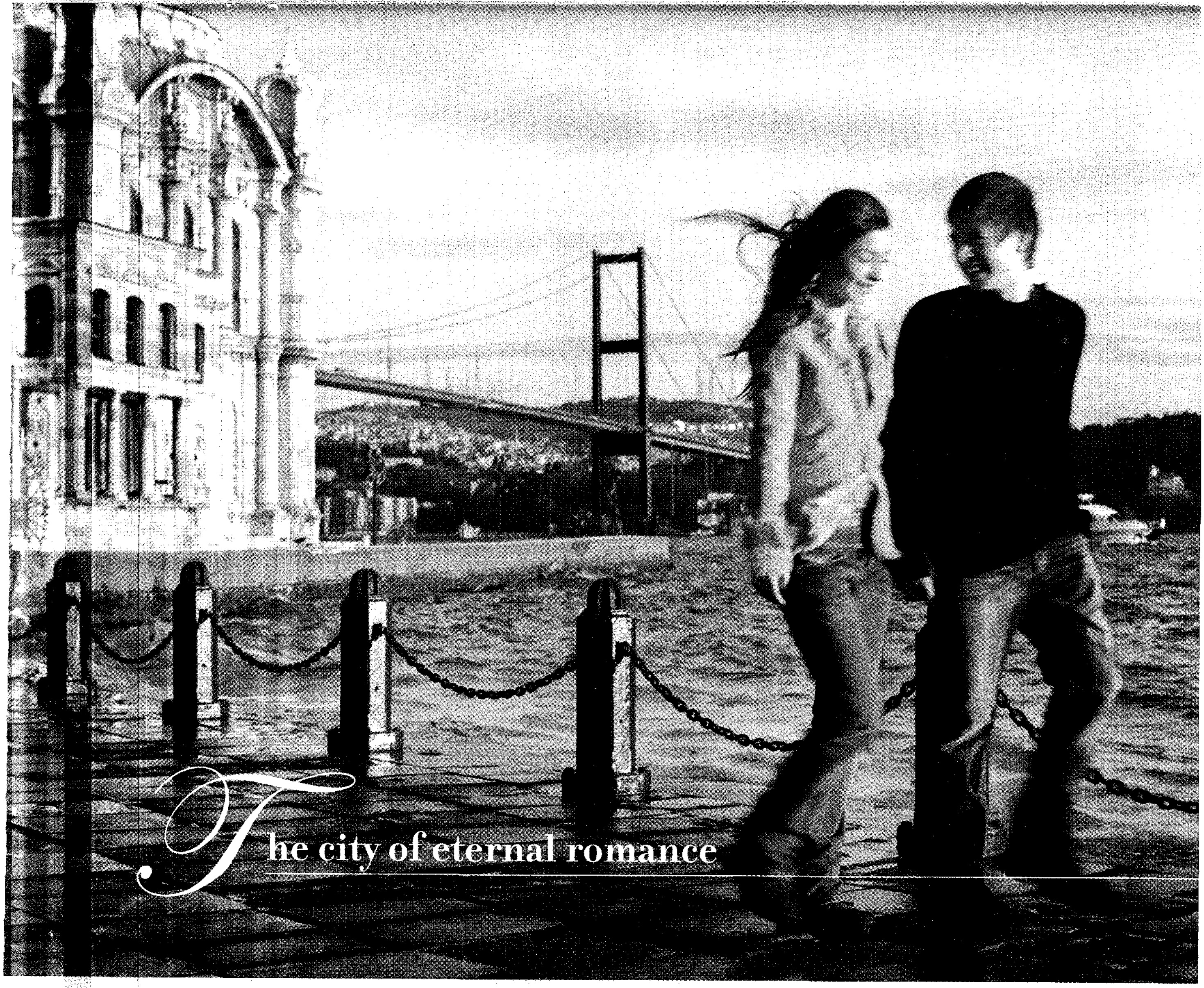
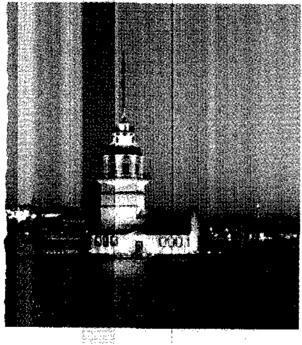

The city of eternal romance



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LOST MITTEN

FATE WAS GENEROUS THAT DAY. It gave Will a second chance in the form of a mitten. Emily's mitten. She had accidentally dropped it on her way into the museum, and even though we all know there's no such thing as "an accident," it conveniently gave him a reason to find her… *continued at holidaystory.com*

BANANA REPUBLIC